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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[“AND YOU ARE IN LOVE WITH HIM?” MINNIE SHOOK HER HEAD.]

A LONG ESTRANGEMENT.

BY ERNEST BRENT,

AUTHOR OF

“Love’s Redemption,” “Waiting for the Tide,”
“Brookdale,” “Sweetbrier,” “The World’s
Wayside,” “Milly Lee,” “Strangely
Married,” &c.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN LOVE IS CRUEL.

“Tis in my memory locked,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Every inordinate cup is unblest’d, and the ingredient
is a devil.

THAT there was a secret of some kind between
these two the kind-hearted landlord of “The
George” felt certain, but the innocence of the
girl’s face with its pathetic beauty told him it
was one which an angel might have heard with-

out a tear, but he could not help feeling angry
with Mr. Jerningham.

He saw how pale she turned at sight of him
and how her footsteps faltered on the doorstep.

“Come in, my dear,” he said, taking her
hand, “there is no one here you need be afraid of.
The gentleman you were kind enough to
mistake for me is Mr. Grantham. Now that
you are in together I think you ought to beg my
pardon, but as he is an old friend of mine I
forgive you. This is Mr. Crampton, our manager,
who did one of the wisest things of his life when
he engaged you and your father.”

“I remembered Miss Lockhart so well as a
child,” the manager said, with his hand on his
watch pocket. He had a vague idea that his
heart was somewhere in that region, “and I
heard so much of her—hem—histrionic genius
—just remind me of that for the playbills, will
you, Chappell? Important engagement of Miss
Minnie Lockhart, daughter of the celebrated and
unrivalled tragedian whose histrionic genius
have—”

“Has,” growled Mr. Grantham. “I hope you
do not mix your liquors as you do your language.
Leave the playbill alone and go on with what you
were saying.”

“Has, if you like,” said the manager, testily,
“and, besides, how do you know? Have sounds

just as well, and the public would not know
any better. I suppose I can put what I like on
my own playbill.”

“Oh, certainly; write yourself down what
Dogberry suggested if you like.”

“Has,” said the manager, defiantly. “It does
not sound nearly so well as ‘have’ to me, and
it shall be ‘have,’ by Jove! Daughter of the
celebrated and unrivaled tragedian, whose his-
trionic genius—”

“How will you make it plural?” Mr. Gran-
tham inquired, politely.

“Well, then, genuses if you will be so par-
ticular—(never mind him, my dear, he is only
jealous of your father)—whose histrionic genuses
have attained for them a world-wide celebrity.”

“But you said celebrated before.”

“You had better write the playbill yourself,”
said Mr. Crampton, nearly out of temper; “how
can a man give his mind to study when you in-
terrupt him every minute?”

This was too much even for Mr. Jerningham,
and his musical laugh followed softly on the
deep base of Grantham and the landlord’s
heavy ring.

“Leave the playbill to me,” he said, coming
forward, “and permit me to thank Miss Lock-
hart for her support during the last week of my
engagement. It has been weary work till now,

and now," he added, with a sigh, "it will give me a remembrance that will go with me even when I am very far away from Lynncastle. When last we met, Miss Lockhart, about a year ago, I did not expect to see you here."

The sweetness of his tone, the clasp of his soft hand, and the tenderness in his large grey eyes were almost too much for her, and her voice was tremulous with tears when she replied.

"I did not know you were here, Mr. Jerningham, or I would not have come."

"If you say that, and so sadly," he said, "our friends will think there is some unhappy difference between us, and yet," he added, turning to the company with a smile of exquisite frankness, "it is a very simple matter to explain. Miss Lockhart and I were engaged together at—was it Canterbury? and she was cast for a part for which I did not think her fit then."

"And you refused to let me play," said Minnie, in a voice that had grown firmer while she spoke. "I thought it very cruel at the time, Mr. Jerningham, but I think you were right now. You see I have had so much experience since."

"What was it you objected to," asked the landlord, "the lady, or the part she wanted to play? and what right had you to interfere?"

"The right," said the handsome actor, with his genial smile, "was simply mine as manager of the company; our manager proper had left on the previous Saturday and taken the treasury with him. I objected to the lady for the part, Mr. Chappell—and the part for the lady."

"And what, sir?" inquired Mr. Grantham, in his deepest bass, "was the part you objected to?"

"It was Rosalind."

"Rosalind, sir," said the tragedian, rising majestically, "Rosalind in Shakespeare's incomparable comedy 'As You Like It,' and you objected to a lady of Miss Lockhart's beauty, and genius appearing in that most glorious and matchless conception. I can scarcely find words to express my surprise. I myself, sir, have played Jaques—the melancholy Jaques—and my wife, Mrs. Grantham, sir, is acknowledged universally to be the most piquant Audrey on the stage. Why, sir, where could have been your judgment?"

"I did not wish," said Mr. Jerningham, turning his large grey eyes full upon the speaker, "to submit Miss Lockhart's beauty and genius to so severe a test at such an early age, and it may be that I have an impression, Mr. Grantham, that people who go to see that play go more for the beauty than the genius of the actress who plays Rosalind. I did not give Miss Lockhart my reasons at the time, but she has them now, and I hope I shall not shock you too much, Mr. Grantham, when I tell you that in spite of the fact that you have played Jaques—the melancholy Jaques—the play itself is one I do not care for—on the stage."

"Why, where on earth, sir, would you have it?"

"In the study. It is a splendid reading play—especially that portion in which we have the fine reflective passages delivered by Jaques—the melancholy Jaques. But the whole thing is marred by the stale old device to which Shakespeare had recourse when he dressed a couple of pretty girls in boys' attire and set them wandering about the forest of Arden in masquerade and not disguise. Miss Lockhart shall play in Shakespeare to her heart's content, and I will give her my best support while I remain, but we will have no characters requiring a masquerade, which is at once a degradation to her who puts it on and to the genuine art of the stage."

"And you are right," said the landlord of "The George," emphatically. He had been watching Mr. Jerningham closely and saw the pure and tender reverence and compassion with which his large grey eyes were filled while they rested on Miss Lockhart's face. "I respect you, sir, and admire your motives. It was the kindest thing you ever did for Miss Lockhart; there are plenty of characters for her without them. I never liked them, when

I come to think of it. I have seen 'The Honey-moon,' and 'Twelfth Night,' and that play with Eugene in it, and it always went against my common sense to see a pretty little woman with her sweet voice and tender limbs and baby face making pretence to be a man in silk and satin. If that was the only difference between you I hope you will make it up and finish the season together. For, between ourselves, Mr. Jerningham, you were not thinking of going away until Miss Lockhart came."

For an instant those large grey eyes flashed at him with a glance so deadly that his heart beat quicker, *brave as he was*. Then Mr. Jerningham turned to the manager with a simple question.

"Do you expect any more of the company here?"

"Yes, Mrs. Grantham. Kitty is coming—isn't she, Jim?"

"I do not know," groaned Mr. Grantham, with uplifted hands. "Heaven, forgive me, I was almost going to say I do not care. I have been on the stage for thirty years, twenty-five of them as leading man, and I have played everything, from *Rosencrantz* to *Richelieu* and *Lear*; now, in the zenith of my day, I—I, whose life has been one long reverence of the immortal bard—am told by the most accomplished scholar and actor it was ever my good fate to meet that Shakespeare—William Shakespeare—is only fit for the study. After that," and his hand, wandering round the table in search of his own glass, which was empty, found Mr. Crampton's, which was full, "all things fade into insignificance—and here is Kitty, by Jove!"

Kitty, otherwise Mrs. Grantham, was a plump, merry-looking, black-eyed little woman of forty, but she did not look it by ten years. She was as light on her feet and as full of fun as she had been at half her age.

To see her with her husband was like looking at a kitten that had placed itself under the protection of a good-tempered mastiff. They formed the oddest contrast in the world to Mr. Marlowe, the low-comedian, and his wife, who came in a little later. He was a small, stout man, with a short, red nose, and a mouth that turned up slightly at the corners. He was an excellent actor, and mentally fit for much better work than he had done, but it was impossible to see him on the stage without smiling at the very look of him. It might have been said of him, as his old friend Grantham suggested the maid who was going a milking said of herself, his face was his fortune.

He was quite a young man, something under forty. His wife was five or six years older, and towered above him by a head; she was really a handsome woman, with a majestic stage presence and a countenance that might have been a trifle less Roman in its severity. There was a dark rumour that Mr. Grantham was responsible for the extraordinary marriage, and he never denied the imputation except by a solemn *wink*.

"What more could a man desire?" he would say. "She is a magnificent creature, and has been the making of him."

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," the manager said, when the last comers were seated, "since we are altogether I cannot do better than introduce you generally to Miss Lockhart. With my already very excellent company strengthened by the valuable assistance she and her gifted father—the celebrated and unrivalled tragedian, Hector Lockhart, just returned from a highly-successful tour round the world—put that down, Chappell, for the bill—we hope to supply our friends and patrons with an entertainment unparalleled in theatrical annals—put that down, Chappell, and be careful how you spell it. And at the same time, ladies and gentlemen, we have an idea that we shall replenish a somewhat exhausted exchequer."

"You are a genius, Crampton," said Mr. Grantham, with a gravity that always left his friends in doubt, for he was a notorious practical joker and humourist of the most profound order. "The only pity is that you mistook your voca-

tion. You ought to have been a showman, sir. It would have been a treat to hear you outside a travelling menagerie. How you would have fetched the people in, by Jove! Why, sir, you are a Demosthenes in your way."

Mr. Crampton had never heard of Demosthenes before, but he took it as a compliment, and glasses were raised.

"I daresay I should have done tolerably well in that line," he said, modestly, "but there did not seem quite so much dignity about it as there is in the regular theatre."

"Is it the father of that young lady you mean when you speak of the celebrated and unrivalled tragedian?" asked Mrs. Marlowe, with an accent which would have delighted an Irishman.

"Yes, my dear madam. You remember him—Hector Lockhart?"

"I thought I did," was the dry response, "and I am sorry for her, poor thing, for he looked as if he had just returned from a highly-successful tour round the public-houses, and finished up at the police-station—that's where you will find him."

"Oh, my father!" the girl moaned, with a cry of shame. "Algernon, you will go to him?"

"Yes, my darling," he said, tenderly, and he kissed her pale lips. "You, Mrs. Grantham, will take care of her for me. As for you, madam, you might have found a better time and place for saying that and have spared this poor girl the undeserved humiliation."

It was the first time they had heard Mr. Jerningham's Christian name, and the scene which had just passed betrayed a secret he had tried in vain to keep.

"We will clear the room, please," said the landlord, sternly, "and with your permission leave Miss Lockhart with Kitty. Jerningham, I will go with you."

That gentleman, however, was already gone. The Lynncastle police station was not far from the theatre and he hired a cab as he went along. He had never felt so full of rage and bitterness. He had engaged the driver, and told him what was required, when the landlord touched him on the shoulder.

"What are you going to do with him?" Mr. Chappell asked.

"Take him to my rooms and speak to him."

"How was it that Miss Lockhart spoke to you by your Christian name, and what did you mean?"

"Wait and see," was the stern reply. "I am in no mood for answering questions just now."

The landlord said no more, but he meant to have an explanation. The secret was taking a graver aspect than it had worn before.

They found Mr. Lockhart fast asleep in the corner of a cell, with the sunlight throwing bars of gold upon him through the grating. Both looked at him with some pity in spite of their indignation.

"We could do nothing else with him," the inspector said, with apologetic respect. "In fact the best thing we could do was to bring him here. He was wandering about with people following him from one house to the other—staggering and dropping his money through his fingers—so there was nothing else to be done."

"Nothing," said Mr. Jerningham, "but the man is thoroughly exhausted, and drink always had a strange effect upon him. How long has he been here?"

"Nearly two hours, sir."

"And he does not seem likely to wake for two hours more. See that the cab door is open, Chappell. I will take him home with me."

With a strength that seemed incredible, to judge by his appearance, he lifted the heavy form of Minnie's father and carried him out to the cab. The few people assembled on the pavement had no time to look at him before the

driver set his horse in motion, and so far not many were aware that this drunken wreck of manhood and the celebrated and unrivalled tragedian were identical.

"I am not a rich man, and I am a publican," Mr. Chappell said, "but I would give a thousand pounds if he would swear never to take another drop of intoxicating drink and keep his word. I hate to have to keep on telling a man of his faults, it does not give him a chance of forgetting them or leaving them behind him."

CHAPTER IV.

A STEERN RECKONING.

The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

MR. JERNINGHAM occupied a handsome set of rooms in a house that stood in the best part of Lynncastle, and in one, through which he carried Hector Lockhart to his bedchamber, an easel with a half-finished picture and a piano with Beethoven's only opera open upon it, showed the taste and refinement of the man. He asked Mr. Chappell to throw a rug on the bed before he placed his burden there. His delicate refinement shrank from the idea of putting Mr. Lockhart's soiled and dirty garments in contact with the counterpane.

There for an hour or more Miss Lockhart's father slept profoundly whilst the landlord of "The George" smoked a cigar and helped himself to seltzer water, which he flavoured according to his fancy from a liquor stand.

He dropped a remark now and then, but did not try to begin a conversation. There was something in his companion's countenance which suggested that under the circumstances silence was wisdom.

Mr. Jerningham sat down to the piano and played some dreamy pieces from *Fidelio*, associating the music in his mind with the face and voice of her who was so dear to him, and whom in the very depth of a noble love he had tried so hard to avoid. That there was a mystery about him was generally known, and conjectures had been busily at work in the attempt to fathom it, but the handsome actor was quite impenetrable. He never spoke of himself or his family. He lived a singularly pure and blameless life, and had no visitors except his friends from the theatre. He gave them pleasant evenings, at which he displayed a delicate and generous hospitality that was nothing less than princely, and could only have been suggested by one born, as Mr. Chappell put it in a hackneyed phrase—in the lap of luxury.

"That man has been used to West End clubs and West End people," the landlord of "The George" observed to Grantham when they were walking home together after one of these pleasant evenings, "and he is a gentleman by the way he spends his money—not recklessly or foolishly, like a man who has come suddenly into a fortune. He does not stand stray dozens of champagne to vulgar people who do not know how to drink it and do not want it, and he does not pull out a handful of gold and silver when he has to pay away a few shillings. That's where a man shows what he is."

"He is a gentleman by the way he speaks," Mr. Grantham responded, "and a scholar by the books he reads. If you call upon him at odd times he is just as likely to be reading Latin or Greek as English; but if we come to talk for a month, my dear boy, we could only come back to the one unmistakable fact—he is a gentleman with generations of gentleness behind him."

Mr. Chappell thought of this while he smoked his cigar, reflectively, and listened to the music the actor played. He had no idea how near he went to the truth as he revolved one possibility after another.

"He is a rich and independent man," the landlord said to himself, "with a liking for the stage and the power to gratify his fancy so far, but he is not entirely his own master in certain

things—belongs to a titled family, I should say, met Minnie Lockhart and took compassion on her, seeing what a father she has—fell in love with her, and is too proud to marry her and too honourable to think of anything else. It would not do for him, so far as I can read it, to go back when his wanderings are over with a wife that his family would not approve of. I know what society is. He might do it and set the world at defiance, but it would be a living death to her."

The music ceased as the man in the next room began to move. He had never been in the actor's house before, and he was lost in wonder as to who he was and how he came there.

"Go and bring him, Lockhart, to me when he is presentable," Mr. Jerningham said, in the tone of involuntary command he sometimes fell into, "and Heaven give me patience to bear with him for her."

The kind-hearted landlord went in to assist Mr. Lockhart in removing the traces of his shameful indulgence and prepare him for the interview. He saw that it would be one of a serious nature, and he hated, as he said, to have to keep on telling a man of his faults.

"I suppose you wonder where you are and how you came here?" he said, as he gave him some seltzer he had taken in. "These are Mr. Jerningham's rooms, and we brought you from the police-station. Do you remember anything?"

"Very dimly, old friend. But I am ashamed to look you in the face."

"You need not mind me," said Chappell, "though I must say I am disappointed after trying as I have to put you on your legs again. It is the poor girl I am thinking of, and it strikes me you will have rather a heavy reckoning to settle with Jerningham. He is waiting for you, and looks as if he means business."

"I am obliged to him for the temporary shelter he has given me," said Lockhart, moodily, "but I have no business to discuss with him. I am not fit for it."

"Will nothing help you, or are you a hopeless slave to your curse?" said Mr. Chappell. "Have you no thought of what lies ahead of this?"

"Of course I have," replied Lockhart, testily. "I can see as plain as any man where I am going to, but I can't stop now. It is all down hill."

What a world of weariness and hopelessness there was in his tone. His head, which he raised at first while speaking, fell back again, and he lay with closed eyes until his companion spoke again.

"Will not thinking of your daughter help you?" he said. "For her sake now, try and be a man again."

"If thinking of her would have helped," said Lockhart, struggling into a sitting position and extending his right arm to give emphasis to his words, "I should have faced about long ago. Think of her! Have I not her always in my thoughts, and even in my mad dreams, when that, pointing to the brandy bottle, 'has held me, she is there amid the turmoil. Think of her! Oh, Heaven! But I am lost, and you waste your breath on me."

"Well, come into the next room and see Mr. Jerningham. I am going to fetch your daughter," said Mr. Chappell.

"Ay, that's right, bring her," muttered the wretched man, as he took the arm of the other. "I feel as if I couldn't move without her. I'm bad this time—bad as bad can be."

Mr. Jerningham was reading a book, or affecting to read one, when they entered the room where he was sitting. He looked up with the sleepy look in his eyes that acted as a screen to his thoughts, and seeing the state Lockhart was in wheeled an easy-chair to the table, and with a graceful movement of his head invited him to sit.

Lockhart sank into the chair like one who has wandered many weary miles and can go no farther.

"You can go now," he said to Mr. Chappell, "I'll wait for her here."

Mr. Jerningham accompanied the host of "The George" to the door, where they exchanged a few words in an undertone.

"I have not much to say to him," said the former, "but I wish to see them together. You will be as speedy as you can."

"If you have anything harsh to say," returned Mr. Chappell, with a backward glance at Hector Lockhart, sitting with bent shoulders and his eyes fixed dreamily upon the table, "I think I should postpone it."

"I do not think that I need put aside anything I meditate telling him," said Jerningham, "he is in a weak and shattered state, but it is nothing new."

"I have not seen him so bad before," said Mr. Chappell. "But it is not for me to dictate to you. There appears to me more between you than I know of."

"Much more," said Mr. Jerningham, with a quiet smile.

And Mr. Chappell, with another glance at the man he had so often befriended, which met with no response, went his way.

He thought his best plan would be to go straight back to "The George," for he was more likely to meet with Minnie at that house than at any other place, and she was there, awaiting the return of her father with some anxiety.

Mr. Chappell smoothed his face into a look of easy indifference and sent a message for her to see him as soon as possible. There was no immediate haste, but she was to come when convenient.

He was sure she would come at once, and she was with him before the messenger could return to report the reception his message met with. Mr. Chappell met her with a smile that cost him much to assume.

"I thought it best to let you know where Mr. Lockhart is," he said, "he is with Mr. Jerningham, and will be glad to see you."

"If you have anything to tell me," said Minnie, fixing her eyes steadily upon him, "do not beat about the bush. Let me hear what new misfortune I have to bear."

"Nothing has happened to him. He has met with no accident."

"And he is well?"

"As well as he can be—after he has been indiscreet. My dear Miss Lockhart, be reassured, I do not think there is anything to give you anxiety. After we had released him," pursued Mr. Chappell, "Mr. Jerningham kindly offered him temporary shelter."

"But why does he stay?"

"An odd fancy has taken him that you must help him home. And Mr. Jerningham also desires you to go. I inferred from what he said that he had something to say that could only be said in the presence of both."

"You are not trifling with me?" said Minnie, with a sudden light in her eyes.

"No."

"He said as much to you?"

"He did. And I left them together awaiting your coming."

"But I do not know where Mr. Jerningham lives."

"I will go with you," said Mr. Chappell, resuming his hat, "it is not very far—something near ten minutes' walk."

They said little by the way, and the little that was said was uttered by Mr. Chappell. Minnie sometimes did not answer him, and when she did only a monosyllable was offered him. She appeared to be thinking of some great joy at hand, and looked like one who, after much sorrow and trouble, sees peace rising in the horizon.

Reaching Mr. Jerningham's abode they found the door ajar, Mr. Chappell had accidentally left it so, and without knocking or ringing they entered.

"Shall I wait for you?" Mr. Chappell asked.

"No, thank you," she replied, "you have already been too good to me. Do not waste any further time."

She had put her foot upon the stairs, and he was turning away with an undecided look in his face, when the voice of a man speaking angrily reached them. It was familiar to them both, and Minnie hurried on. Mr. Chappell hesitated a brief moment and then followed her.

He overtook her as she reached the landing facing the door of Mr. Jerningham's room. That door was open, and Minnie could see her father seated at the table wildly gesticulating. He was addressing Mr. Jerningham, who was hidden from view by the open door.

"You are a base scoundrel," he was saying, "a villain—and but for the weakness I have brought on myself, I would take you by the throat and—"

"Go in and calm him," whispered Mr. Chappell, hurriedly. "He is beside himself, and would be deaf to any voice but yours."

She went in and the honest innkeeper closed the door, waiting on the landing, not to play the spy, but in case his services would be needed.

Minnie's entrance acted as oil on troubled waters. Her father, seeing the loved form, forgot all else, and as she stooped down and kissed him he patted her gently with trembling hands.

"This is wrong," she said. "You have been agitating yourself, dearest."

"Unnecessarily so," broke in the calm voice of Mr. Jerningham. "I was only speaking of a recent chapter in our lives—"

"Which was a lie," put in Mr. Lockhart, in parenthesis.

"Which I thought would be unnecessary to recapitulate in your presence," pursued Mr. Jerningham, not heeding him. "It was unnecessary that it should be told—"

"It is false," growled Lockhart. "It can't be true."

"Father," said Minnie, who was deadly pale, "be patient. What may appear so black at first may be explained. Algernon, if the hour has come—"

"I'll not hear him," said Hector Lockhart, with the gleam of the drunkard's insanity in his eyes. "Who is he that he should dare to talk of Hector Lockhart's daughter as he has done? You braggart fool," he cried, rising with a stagey air, "your base life shall answer for it. Minnie—Minnie—what is this?—the room—there are noises in the air. Avant! and quit me, foul fiends. I—I am called—called. Yes!—ready—ready—"

And then he slowly sank down with his head upon the table and his arms stretched out.

With amazement, terror and horror both had watched his frantic gestures. They could see that he was not talking to them, but in his wild frenzy was once more treading the stage, on which, alas! he was never to set foot again. It was not until he had become still and silent that they drew near. Minnie touched her father upon the shoulder.

"You are better now, dearest," she said, softly. "May I get you something? Algernon, I am ashamed to ask for it, but it is the only thing that revives him. Will you give me a little brandy?"

But Algernon Jerningham stood still, with pitying eyes resting on the father and daughter alternately.

"Oh! father," cried Minnie, wringing her hands, "why are you silent? Will you not answer me?"

Algernon Jerningham moved softly round to her side, and, taking her hand, would have drawn her away, but she strove against him.

"Let me go!" she said, piteously. "Do you not see how much he needs me—how weak and helpless he is?"

"Minnie," said Jerningham, with a soft cadence in his voice that was like a note in a song of sorrow, "he will need you no more on earth."

"Not dead?" she cried, wildly.

"Ay, dead," he answered, "and you must not look upon him yet. No, dearest, I cannot permit you. What can you do? Thank Heaven, you have come, Chappell. Take her away, I beseech you."

"So the end has come," said the host of "The

George," as he drew the arm of the weeping Minnie through his. "Poor fellow."

"You heard him cursing me," said Algernon Jerningham.

"Yea. We could but hear it."

"And yet I had said naught to rouse him. What fancied insult he discovered in my words I cannot tell. It was a delusion. Now take her home, and I will see that all that is needful be done for all that remains of Hector Lockhart."

"We shall see you soon, I suppose," said Mr. Chappell.

"In an hour I hope to be with you."

(To be Continued.)

THE NEWS FROM YORKTOWN. A STORY OF THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

CHAPTER XI.

THE news from Yorktown had a political significance also. The assault and capture of the batteries meant the end of the war, and the end of the war meant the recognition of American independence.

La Fayette and our hero had known each other in Paris, had met again in Rhode Island, and now found themselves, comrades in arms, on the banks of the York.

They were nearly of the same age, and quite an intimacy sprang up between them. At La Fayette's request Aylesbury was transferred to his command, and in the companionship of the marquis and other French nobles he now spent most of his time.

"Ah! mon ami," said La Fayette, in his broken English, one evening, "if we can but beat Monsieur Cornwallis we shall do a great thing for freedom. When I see how the people are ground down in Europe I thank God that America was discovered."

"If we capture Cornwallis," replied Aylesbury, "as I believe we shall, it will be a new departure in human history. Heretofore, governments have existed in the history of kings and princes only, the people have been regarded as of no account, the many have been plundered to enrich the few. But in the discovery, settlement, and development of these colonies," his eyes kindling as he warmed with his theme, "it is, I think, impossible not to recognise the hand of Providence. Here, far away from the despotism of Europe—which would, in self-defence, have stamped out our institutions long ago, if they had been growing up at their sides—we have been enabled to strike our roots deep and to grow experienced in self-government, and now, if we can only succeed in establishing our independence and can maintain a republican intact we shall give an impetus to true freedom that will influence the world for centuries to come, if not for ever."

His hearers listened enthusiastically. They were, be it remembered, descendants almost to a man of that Frankish tribe which had overrun northern Gaul in the first centuries of Christianity. They had ever since maintained their blood more or less unmixed. They were still Franks rather than Frenchmen, a class set apart, conquerors even after hundreds of years. If they were luxurious they were not effeminate. They were the most intelligent of all European nobles. They were, too, more or less affected by the philosophy of the day. They had talked of political equality in the salons of Paris and of the rights of man, and were, in theory at least, the friends of liberty and regeneration. They, more than any others that have ever lived, were ready to die for an idea. As they applauded they nodded to each other approvingly.

"The Old World," continued Aylesbury, "is wearing out. There are cycles in nations as well as dynasties. Europe, after two thousand years,

has nearly finished another term of civilisation. Its most polished peoples are now where those of the Roman Empire were as it verged to its decline. They have the same despotic systems of government, the same extremes of wealth and poverty, the same vast financial burdens involving exhausting taxation, and the same delusive prosperity. My friends," he exclaimed, "we stand on the crust of a volcano that at any moment may crumble in."

"I fear it is too true," said more than one.

"But here in this New World we begin where you leave off," continued the ardent young patriot. "To light us on our way we have all the experience of the past two thousand years. Let us but conquer here and we conquer for all time! The surrender of Cornwallis will be not merely the capture of so many Englishmen, it will be the final extinction on this continent of that falsehood of doctrines—the divine right of kings. It will be more. It will be the establishment of the true doctrine, that governments exist for the many, not for the few. And from here will go forth the new political gospel to all the world, 'By the people, and for the people.' That will be the motto of the future, messieurs."

"You make me regret, mon frère," said La Fayette, embracing our hero, "that I was not born an American. Ah! these forests, this equality between man and man, how it puts to shame our worn-out civilisation, our rigid caste, our horrible extremes of wealth and poverty. I sometimes think a deluge is at hand. Can things continue as they are? Were throne and nobility, and all, to go down in one grand crash I should not be surprised. Yes, gentlemen, we may have yet to liquidate," he said, a prophetic gleam shining in his eyes, "we may yet have to liquidate in fire and blood the debt that has been running up against us for centuries. Heaven, help us in that hour of our need!"

And more than one hearer, as years after he went to the guillotine, remembered these remarkable prophetic words.

A solemn hush fell upon the little group. Even the gayest and most volatile, even Lauzan, who was one of the company, felt an awe indescribable. After a short pause the marquis resumed:

"But now to business. We broke ground today, as you know, against the enemy. We are but six hundred yards distant. By daybreak the trenches will be sufficiently advanced to cover our men. After that our progress will be steady. Within four days, if I do not err, we shall have enough batteries and redoubts erected to silence the British fire. This is the sixth of the month. October you call it," looking questioningly at Aylesbury. "By the eleventh we shall be able to open the second parallel within three hundred yards of the foe. Ah; it is then," rubbing his hands, "we shall have them. I did observe indeed to-day, when I made a reconnaissance, that the British had two little redoubts that did seem to flank our new trenches, and if so they will open other embrasures and keep a fire incessant on us; but in that case, pouf! we shall make one grand assault, we shall carry them at point of bayonet. You, Baron de Viomel, shall lead ze French, and I shall lead ze Americans, and my friend here, Aylesbury, shall go with me and we shall carry the entrenchments, and, mon Dieu!" turning again to the baron, "we shall see which shall get in first, you or I."

La Fayette, perhaps, did not speak without authority. The siege went on precisely as he had predicted. The enemy enlarged their redoubts and opened a fire on the trenches that threatened to stop all further advance. In consequence Washington determined to assault these positions. The marquis, no doubt, had been informed of this contingency in advance, for when Aylesbury returned to his tent, on the afternoon of the fourteenth, he found an order to be ready to lead a forlorn hope against the enemy's entrenchments that evening.

(Continued on Page 186.)



["HESBA!" SHE CRIED. "MY HESBA!"]

SCARCELY SINNING.
A NEW NOVEL.
BY A POPULAR AUTHOR.

CHAPTER XXXV.

It gives me wonder, great as my content.
To see you here before me.

The telegram which Miranda Lovelace had forwarded to the cottage was correctly interpreted by the widow and an overflowing joy possessed her soul. With a fond mother's intuitive perception with regard to all that concerned her dear ones, she could read between the lines of the terse communication and divined that the only possible meaning of the enigmatical communication must be that her daughter was restored to her as from the dead.

An unbound sense of infinite joy and thankfulness to a merciful Providence filled Mrs. Chepstow's breast. But this feeling did not manifest itself by any marked or violent manifestations of joy. She had suffered too much of trial and of sorrow to feel exultation even in a happiness beyond and above aught she had expected to feel again on earth, and even in her deep gratefulness her demeanour was very calm.

One thing else she yearned for. It was the companionship of her son, in order that he might be made acquainted with the glad tidings and might rejoice in her rejoicing.

But that could not be. Charles Chepstow had taken leave of her and had proceeded to London on business connected with his coming voyage, and from thence would join his ship, and sail at once upon doing so. As she had no address to which she could send a letter for him, Mrs. Chepstow was reluctantly compelled to relinquish the idea of advising him of the good news.

So with the resignation of old age and sorrow the widow waited the next development of her life-drama.

She had not long to wait.

On the evening of the second day after the receipt of the telegram Mrs. Chepstow sat at her window in the evening twilight, the plain needlework on which she was employed resting idly upon her lap and her eyes gazing dreamily out across the little old-fashioned garden over which the shadows were slowly gathering. Suddenly she heard the click of the little rustic gate which separated the garden from the adjacent road. A light came into the widow's eyes as she saw a black-robed figure pass through the gateway and advance slowly along the garden path towards the house. Slowly, and with a curious uncertain hesitation as of a person in a strange place.

Mrs. Chepstow had risen and stepped quickly to the front door, but even in that instant of joy and expectation the strange demeanour and gait of the new comer were too marked to pass unnoticed.

But they were wrongly interpreted.

At the halting and even dilatory progress the fond mother's heart dreamed that it saw the effects of the trial and trouble through which her child had passed.

There was however little time for speculations of this character. Mrs. Chepstow stood now upon the threshold of the cottage, eager-faced and with arms extended wide.

"Hesba!" she cried. "My Hesba!"

For an instant the black-robed figure hesitated; then rushed forward into the open arms with a low cry of:

"Mother!"

And for a space no other words were spoken during that clinging embrace. There was naught but kisses and happy tears.

Happiness—deepest happiness on one side and a restful content, mixed however by something of doubt on the other.

And then, the first welcome past, Mrs. Chepstow led Miranda into the room, and little Ada

running to the girl eagerly raised her happy childish cry of:

"Hesba! oh, here's Sister Hesba tum back again!"

And Miranda had to catch the little one up in her arms and press kisses on her rosy chubby cheeks.

"Will you not go up to your own room, my dear?" queried Mrs. Chepstow, presently, "and take off your things. Then we can sit down and talk, for we have much to say to each other."

"Her room?"

Even at the outset Miranda began to feel the difficulty which her deception would entail and was half-disposed to remove her hat and travelling ulster where she was. But she combated the idea. It would be best from the very first to shrink none of the difficulties which might arise.

She glanced hastily and furtively around the room, which was already dusk with the twilight. There were two doors beside that leading into the small front garden. One of these no doubt stood at the foot of a staircase leading to the upper story of the little home, and the other probably to the kitchen. Which should she take?

Her doubt was fortunately solved for her by little Ada, who toddled over to one of the doors and strove ineffectually to open it.

Miranda took the hint and without any farther hesitation stepped over to this door, and opening it proceeded up a flight of steep, narrow stairs.

Arrived on the small landing she found herself confronted by three doors, between which she had to choose. By what sign should she select the chamber which had been appropriated to the girl whom she was personating?

Cautiously and noiselessly she opened one door and peered into the apartment. An old-fashioned wooden four-post bedstead with chintz furniture stood on one side and beside it a large iron cot. This latter was doubtless little Ada's sleeping-place, and therefore Miranda had little doubt that the room was the widow's.

She carefully closed the door and looked into the adjoining chamber. The plain iron bedstead without hangings would have done little to help her to a decision, but sundry pipes and pipe-racks over the mantel, a pair each of boxing-gloves and single-sticks depending on one wall, some Indian weapons standing in one corner and a few prints mainly of ships or pretty if rather inane female faces, left no doubt in the girl's mind that this was Charles Chepstow's room when he was on shore.

The third room must then be the right one, and opening its door confidently Miranda stepped in.

It was a prettily and tastefully furnished little apartment. The bedstead of brass and iron was not cumbered by the old-fashioned excess of hangings. The dressing-table and glass were draped delicately as by feminine fingers. Several delicately executed water-colour drawings, by no means without merit, adorned the walls, and a small hanging shelf contained some well-selected books, chiefly of a devotional and meditative character.

Miranda glanced round the pretty little chamber with satisfied air.

"A pleasant little nest," she murmured. "I could be well content to pass my life here. Quiet and peace will be far better than gilded slavery as the wife of Simon Dawson. Hesba, my friend, you have not chosen wisely."

She removed her outer garments and hung them up in a closet with quite an air of possession. Clear-minded and courageous, the girl followed out her resolve with infinite coolness. She had determined to adopt the identity of Hesba Chepstow, and this determination she would unfalteringly pursue.

When she had laved her face and smoothed her hair the girl, before descending to the living room of the cottage, examined the water-colour drawings closely and curiously.

We have said that they showed ability. It was not into their merits or demerits however that Miranda was making perquisition. She was simply examining their lower corners minutely. She found that for which she was seeking.

Each was signed in small, almost undecipherable characters, "H. C."

Miranda had an impression that she had heard Hesba claim some little skill as a painter, but she was not absolutely sure. This discovery however settled the matter and the girl could more safely avow to Mrs. Chepstow her plan of adding to the family finances.

Then going back to the mirror Miranda adjusted a pair of neutral-tinted eye-preservers, which she had been wearing when she entered the cottage, and which the widow had regarded with some surprise.

Then she descended.

Over the evening's meal she recounted her adventures, at her mother's request. Little Ada, who had been permitted on this occasion to sit up, rested in the new comer's lap. The quiet joy of all seemed great, but yet mingled with an indefinable something of restraint.

On Miranda's part this was due to caution. She fully appreciated the difficulties—even dangers—of her position, and her speech was slow—sometimes there was a strange reticence about her.

Mrs. Chepstow, despite the deep joy that filled her heart, was puzzled. The daughter who had returned as it were from the grave seemed to be other than the one who had left her not long since. The widow felt uncomfortable under the stony gaze of the dark glasses, the slow speech of her supposed daughter sounded in a measure constrained, even the manner of the girl appeared to differ in some unexplainable fashion from that of the Hesba of old.

And, baby as she was, some such thoughts, though less definite and clear, must have floated through Ada's mind. For now and again she would throw her chubby arms around the now-found sister's neck and press her childlike kisses on the smooth cheek, then suddenly she would cease these demonstrations of affection and watch with puzzled eyes the face which bent above her.

"Sister Hesba," she lisped, presently, "I

wish you would not wear those funny black things over your eyes. I liked you better as you used to be."

"I must, darling."

"Oh, do take them off for a little while, Sister Hesba. Let me see your eyes—now do!"

Something in the silent look of Mrs. Chepstow appeared to second the child's appeal.

Miranda raised her hand and calmly removed the eye-glasses.

Mrs. Chepstow breathed more freely as she met the quiet look of the soft, violet eyes. She could not have told what she feared—whether personal disfigurement of her daughter or otherwise, but fear she had—a fear which the full sight of Miranda's eyes dispelled.

"Why do you wear them, Hesba?" she said, with a bright smile at Ada the girl resumed the glasses.

"Weakness of sight, mother," was the slow response, "brought on by that injury to the brain of which I have spoken."

"Does the doctor think it will be permanent?"

"No. It will pass away in time. Meanwhile I must exercise a certain amount of caution and protect my eyes in this manner."

Then the conversation drifted into other channels.

Each had much to say. Miranda related her history from the wreck of *La Hirondelle*, and ended by inquiries after Charles Chepstow.

"He has got a ship," replied the widow, "and at the time of sailing is uncertain, has gone to London to the agents. I don't expect him back. He, like all others, thought we should see your face no more, dear Hesba. I do not know where he is, or a telegram might bring him back for a flying visit."

"Will the voyage be a long one?" queried Miranda.

"No, only to the West Indies. So, in any case, you will see him soon, for you will not leave us again at present?" concluded the widow, in anxious query.

"I do not think of so doing, mother."

"There will be no present need, my child, thanks to the kindness of Miss Lovelace."

"Ah?"

"Yes; she sent me a very kind letter and enclosed a cheque for fifty pounds. That will keep things going well until Charles returns—although indeed—"

Mrs. Chepstow broke off suddenly.

"What were you about to say, mother?"

"I will not vex you with fresh troubles on the day that you are given back to us from the dead, my dear."

"I would rather hear."

"Young Dawson has been here alleging some newly-discovered claim against us. Charles does not credit it, and inflicted summary chastisement upon him. But we will not borrow trouble from that, my dear, and Charles will most likely be back before they can take any measures to trouble us."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

I said to Sorrow's awful storm,
That beat against my breast,
Rage on—thou must destroy this form
And lay it low at rest;
But still the spirit that now brooks
Thy tempest raging high,
Undaunted on its fury looks
With steadfast eye.

HESBA CHEPSTOW had no long time allowed her for meditations and decision upon the matter of the future relations of Simon Dawson and herself, for upon the morning following her discovery of the paper containing the last wishes of Colonel Lovelace, the morning's post brought her a letter addressed to "Miss Lovelace, Lovelace Manor, Burnside, Devonshire."

The girl was seated at her solitary breakfast when the letter was brought in. Letters to her were by no means numerous. It could hardly be otherwise. She whose place Hesba had taken had left England a child and hence could have

had few correspondents in her native land.

A few ladies whose acquaintance Miranda had made whilst in India might be expected to write occasionally, but the circle of Miss Lovelace's correspondents might be considered decidedly limited.

Hesba recognised the address of the present epistle at once.

It had fallen to her lot to see only too much of the handwriting of the user's son. Business letters, pressing for money on his father's account and insolent billets-doux in his own, had been too often received by the girl during the days that were past to let her forget the bold, careless chirography of young Simon.

The colour left her cheeks and lips as she recognised it now, and the food beside her rested untouched as she turned the letter over and over. Then by the exertion of a powerful resolution she broke the seal.

The letter was brief and polite, though rather formal. It stated that the writer and his father had heard of the arrival in England of Miss Lovelace, and went on to speak of a certain agreement between the late Colonel Sir Humphrey Lovelace and Mr. Samuel Dawson, senior, by which a matrimonial engagement between the daughter of the former and the son of the latter was decided upon.

It was now time, the writer thought, to begin to give effect to that agreement. He regretted that Miss Lovelace had no legal guardian to whom he could write and introduce himself in the first place, but as she had not, and—taking into consideration any wishes of her brothers—was virtually her own mistress, he—Mr. Simon Dawson, junior—proposed to call at Lovelace Manor on the forenoon of the third day after date of letter in order to make the acquaintance of his fiancée.

For a long time the girl sat there with a hopeless, hunted look in the beautiful violet eyes. The ordeal had come upon her more quickly than she had expected in her worst anticipations. She was face to face with her trial; for there was a postscript to the letter in which Simon Dawson begged for a line in return to let him know that Miranda was at Lovelace Manor and would be ready to receive him.

That day the sun shone gloriously over the fair demesnes of Lovelace, but shone in vain for the miserable girl.

As a general rule she had taken much pleasure, despite the visitings of conscience, in her new surroundings. She had learned to love the old Manor and wandered about its old picture-gallery and stately rooms with ever-new delight; nor had the wide, far-spreading grounds which surrounded the mansion less charm for her. She was never tired of wandering under the stately trees of the park, or of exploring the devious paths of the shrubberies. Already she seemed to know every inch of the estate.

But that day she remained in the solitude of her own boudoir.

She was fighting her battle bravely. Would she lose or win?

On the one hand was her love—not even acknowledged to herself—for Lucius Lovelace and her hatred of Simon Dawson, the man who had done so much to wreck her home.

On the other there was the desire to keep the Manor for Lucius and to expiate if might be for her sin.

The struggle was long and hard, but at length that which the girl considered duty conquered and her resolution was taken to write to Simon according the interview.

The fear of detection by him scarcely entered into her thoughts. The marvellous likeness between herself and Miranda was susceptible of proof in various ways, as Dawson's own mistake at the Geneva hotel was sufficient to prove.

So that evening the letter to London was despatched, and the unhappy girl retired to a sleepless pillow.

The next day rather unexpectedly Lucius Lovelace made his appearance at the Manor.

The young man greeted his supposed sister warmly, although his face was very grave and troubled.

This, however, did not hinder him from noticing the unusual pallor in Hesba's coun-

tenance and the dark rings around her eyes which told of a sleepless night.

But his anxious inquiries concerning her health were parried with apparent unconcern. Hesba was debating in her own mind how much or how little of the sad necessity which was laid upon her she should impart to the young man.

At length, when various commonplace topics were exhausted, she asked him whether he had come to the Manor permanently.

"No," he answered, gloomily. "I shall still have to return for a short time, until the end of term. But some of the tradespeople there are pestering me about their 'little accounts.' It's awfully hard upon a fellow, Miranda. Of course I don't blame our dear father for placing me at the university. At that time a stool in my uncle's counting-house and a prospective partnership seemed certainties. But it's been an awful struggle for me. I'm not an extravagant fellow, Miranda, and if I had been the thought of the family embarrassments and our father's continual struggle would have been sufficient to render me cautious. I have been cautious—not a single young fellow in the university more so—but it was a matter of necessity I should associate with certain sets of men, in fact it was father's wish I should do so, and you would be surprised how small bills tell up. Now that the tradespeople find I am poor and have learned that I leave college this term, they have taken to dun me horribly. I don't know where to turn. I have no ready money and the rents of the farms do not turn in until Michaelmas. I have come here to look over the papers in the iron safe and see whether I can induce that old hunk Dawson to advance a little specie."

And the young man endeavoured to force a light-hearted laugh, but the effort sounded constrained and jarring.

Hesba noted this with a fresh pain at her heart. The troubles of this man, with whom her acquaintanceship was so recent, affected her strangely. Rapidly her mind glanced forward into the future and speculated how Lucius would bear the loss of the old family estates, should such a misfortune overtake him. But badly, she feared. If so small a trouble as some trifling college debts could thus move him he was scarcely fitted to face a great trouble and an irreparable loss.

It was well that she had decided to save him. Should she tell him of that decision now?

Yes. It would be well to have it over.

"When do you propose to see Mr. Dawson, Lucius?" she asked.

"To-morrow," was the response.

"That is, of course, the elder Mr. Dawson."

"Certainly. Old Skinfint I call him. Ugh! it's a horrible task to undertake."

"Do you know them both—the Dawsons, père et fils?"

"I know young Simon, casually. He is a frightful cad. There is something almost sublime in the fierce, awful greed of the old man—something that reminds you of Sir Giles Overreach, or even of Milton's Mammon. But the son is simply detestable. His greed is as great as his father's, but not so absorbing. He simply looks upon money as the means of enabling him to live in dissipation and vileness."

Hesba hesitated. At length she said, timidly: "What chance do you think you have of obtaining this advance which you seek?"

"A very slender one. I do not imagine the old hunks will do it; but drowning men proverbially catch at straws, you know, and I must not neglect any chance, however small. It's a horrible humiliation to go through, and I would rather face a loaded cannon than the old Jew."

"You said you were going to look over the family documents in the iron safe, Lucius. Will you do so now and return here when your search is over?"

"With pleasure, my dear sister. I don't suppose the investigation will take me long."

And the young man rose and left the boudoir.

While he was absent Hesba brought out and opened her writing-desk.

In less than half an hour Lucius returned with a very gloomy brow.

"Things look dark for me, sister mine," he said. "There does not appear to be an acre of land nor a brick or tile upon which advances have not been made. The Manor and every fraction of property are mortgaged up to the hilt. The rents due next half will not meet the interest. To ask old Simon Dawson for fresh advances is indeed a forlorn hope. Why should he advance more money upon property which is virtually his own? For it can never be redeemed by me."

And the young man arose from his seat and paced the chamber with hurried steps and in a state of deepest mental perturbation.

"How much money do you require for present needs, Lucius?"

"Only two hundred pounds," responded the young man, gloomily. "But other claims will soon transpire."

"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," quoted Hesba. "At any rate, I can spare you the humiliation of an appeal to Mr. Dawson upon this occasion."

She opened the escritoire, took therefrom the little cheque-book, filled up and signed a cheque, and passed it to the young man.

"What is this, Miranda?" he cried, in surprise.

"It is a cheque for the sum which you named," she responded, calmly.

"And from what source?"

"A small sum which—when our father had saved for me."

"And can you believe me so mean-spirited as to imagine that I would descend to pillage you, my sister, of what little our parent may have been able to gather for you? I know very well the hoard cannot have been a large one."

He looked at her with questioning scrutiny.

"Sufficient for me, Lucius," said Hesba, indifferently.

But the young man was not going to be so put off.

"Does not this," he said, holding up the cheque, "pretty well exhaust it?"

"I will tell you the truth," she said. "There will not be much left. But I do not require much money, and soon"—there was a strange choking sensation at her throat, but she went on bravely—"soon I shall be well provided for in that respect."

He looked at her inquiringly.

She had nervously herself for the disclosure.

"Lucius," she went on, in a hard, strained voice, "did our father in any of his letters to you hint at a means of satisfying Mr. Simon Dawson's claims, or a portion of them, against us otherwise than by repayment?"

The stare of positive astonishment with which the young man regarded her was sufficient reply.

In a moment, however, he had sufficiently recovered from his astonishment for speech.

"Never!" he said, with great emphasis. "My father knew the old usurer a great deal too well to suppose that anything but hard gold would cause him to unloose his talons."

Hesba drew Colonel Lovelace's last letter from the desk.

"This letter," she said, "was written by—"

She hesitated.

That almost insurmountable feeling of repugnance to utter the necessary word which so often seized her had returned with redoubled force.

By a strong exertion of will she broke from it and continued:

"Was written by our father just before he went to that fatal tiger hunt which caused his death. It was primarily intended for my eyes only, but as it refers to matters in which you have the most vivid interest I should like you to read it now."

Lucius opened the letter reverently as one would do a message from the dead and read it slowly. As he proceeded his countenance changed, his lips set themselves closely, and deep furrows came upon his forehead. As he concluded he looked up to Hesba with a gloomy expression of despair in his eyes.

"Miranda, why did you show me this?" he queried, as he handed her the letter.

"Because it concerns you nearly. Why should I not show it to you?"

"Because I would not have had the high opinion which I have ever held of our dear father marred by anything which could represent him on a lower plane than that where I have ever thought him placed."

"How does this letter do that?"

"Can you ask me how?" cried Lucius, vehemently. "Is it possible that I could believe my father would wish to barter a beloved child against the usurer's miserable guineas?"

"Remember it was for the sake of the ancestral estates."

"Perish the ancestral estates!" replied the young man, hotly, rising to his feet and pacing the apartment with hurried steps. "If the men of our race have not been wise, or strong, or enduring enough to redeem the old Manor is it to be endured that a woman of the old race should be bartered, as a Circassian or Georgian used to be sold in the Turkish slave-market? I would have given ten years of my life not to have read that letter."

"You wrong our father, Lucius," Hesba responded, gently. "We know that he did all that man could do, but the soldier's pay is scanty and his opportunities are few. Nor were his plans with regard to your future unwise or unconsidered. If it had been possible for you to have made your way in the great world of commerce you could quickly and easily have released the estates. But Fortune was adverse, as she has so often proved, against the house of Lovelace. This—this marriage appeared to be the sole remaining chance. What wonder, then, that our father clung to it?"

"There is something in what you say, Miranda," said the young man, in a sad tone. "However, we need speak no more of this. If our father was in error in entertaining the wild scheme, it is not for his children to dwell upon his imperfections, and we will let the subject drop for ever."

"Drop! By no means."

"What do you mean?"

For answer the girl handed to Lucius a copy of the letter which she had despatched to young Simon Dawson overnight.

He ran his eyes over it quickly, and a heavy frown settled upon his handsome face.

"Are you mad, Miranda?" he cried, angrily.

"No."

"What else could have prompted you to write this?"

"My resolve to fulfil the duty that was laid upon me, Lucius."

"Duty! No such duty can exist."

"Not when a parent commands?"

"My father did not know this man. Such a union must be repugnant to common sense even under the best of circumstances, but when the man is such a vile wretch as this young Simon Dawson is known to be what word of defence can there be?"

Hesba was silent.

After waiting a moment for her reply Lucius went on, with redoubled heat:

"I would not so wrong my honoured parent's memory as to believe that he would have contemplated this thing had he known only a tenth part of the enormities that the world lays to this young ruffian's charge."

"Papa knew—had good cause to know that the father was a usurer," murmured Hesba.

"Ay, with a character for grinding cruelty enough to sink any human soul to the bottomless pit. But he knew nothing of the son. He is all the father is, with the addition of many black sins such as cannot be placed at the father's door."

"I must face my lot," replied Hesba, despairingly. "It is my fate."

"It shall not be! Why did you not speak to me before writing him?"

The girl hesitated.

"Because," she stammered, at length, "I feared you would not—not—"

"Accept the sacrifice," he concluded. "Nor will I; of that you may be certain."

"Oh! Lucius, you must!" cried the girl, passionately.

"Never!"

"Things have gone too far now to permit me to draw back."

"Not at all. I will arrange that. I can either explain to old Simon to-morrow that you have altered your mind, or I can meet that young villain in your stead and give him very succinctly to understand that we decline the honour of an alliance with his family."

Hesba shook her head slowly.

"It must not be!"

"But I say it shall be!" cried Lucius, passionately. "It is intolerable to think upon."

"It is a duty. Why should not a girl be brave and win back the old acres by a sacrifice—even the sacrifice of herself?"

"Such is not a woman's lot."

"You are mistaken, brother. It is forbidden us to give our life upon the battle-field for the cause we would champion, but we can give our life—at least, our heart's life—in other ways, and this is one."

The young man groaned.

"Your heart's happiness, indeed," he groaned bitterly. "Can you imagine what your daily life would be bound to that cruel, debased clod, whom it is a misuse of words to term a man?"

Hesba turned a shade paler.

Did she not know too well? Not Lucius himself, with the superior opportunities of observation, could know better what Simon Dawson was than she—the girl to whom he had offered the most intolerable of insults, whose family owed its ruin to the evil machinations of him and his unscrupulous parent.

But the next moment her voice sounded forth untroublingly and bravely.

"I shall bear my lot, dear brother, doubt it not."

"I cannot accept the sacrifice, for it would be made for me. Despite the love which my father had for our old ancestral demesne I know that if he could hear my voice to-day he would say that it were well that we faded from the roll of England's territorial proprietors before so fearful a union as this should be consummated."

"My resolution is taken," she replied, calmly.

"I tell you it must not be!" he insisted, with even greater energy. "You, Miranda, to yield up your youth and beauty to such a one as Dawson! The thought is preposterous, for you are marvellously lovely, my sister—I think the loveliest woman whom I have ever seen."

His fixed and admiring regard drew a heightened colour to Hesba's cheeks and set her heart beating more quickly than was its wont.

That sensation warned her of her danger and quickened her resolve. She dared not continue the inmate of the same house with this man—she dared not keep up the farce of their brotherly and sisterly relationship. It would be but laying up bitter memories for her, which would rise up in the future and make an unhappy life even more wretched.

"Lucius, listen to me," cried the girl, rising to her feet and drawing up her slight form with queenly dignity. "You must not attempt to thwart me in my resolve. That resolution is unchangeable, and it is right that it should be so. You yourself, in calmer moments, will acknowledge that I am right. Our father's will should be a law to us. At least it shall be to me."

She hesitated a moment; but reading a moody disagreement in his expressive eyes she added, slowly and impressively:

"There is more than this—something which maidenly modesty would have hidden, but that your obstinacy drags from me. It matters little where my lot may be cast. I can never be a happy woman—never—never! For this there is more than one reason. The burden of a great sin is upon me—a sin which suffering might help to expiate. And, beyond that—turn your face from me, Lucius—I have given my heart—my love—unasked, to one whose bride I can never be, but whom I can never forget. Judge now of my chances of happiness. Be pitiful, and let me seek what I may of peace in mine fox-glove?"

own way. And leave me now, my brother, for I am but a weak woman, and this interview has tried me almost beyond my strength."

(To be Continued.)

FACETIAE.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

HEAD BARMAID: "These tarts are quite stale, Miss Hunt—been on the counter for a fortnight. Would you mind taking them into the second-class refreshment-room?" Punch.

HELEN OF WALDECK.

(A song for the Royal Betrothal.)

HELEN of Waldeck! Say what rhyme
Best may hymn the betrothal time.
Once a prince, in fortunate hour,
Came to woo at Arolsen tower;
Wood and won, and then rode away,
Leaving his love behind, men say.
Princess Helena, fast you hold,
All the heart of our Leopold!

Helen of Waldeck! Thou hast won
England's cultured and student son;
His the part that his father took,
Earnest ever at desk and book;
His to rule with an eager heart
Over the wide domain of Art;
Thine to aid like a loyal wife
All that's best in a husband's life.

Helen of Waldeck! When our strand
Welcomes thee from the Fatherland,
When all the last farewells have rung
On thine ears in the Teuton tongue,
Trust us, thou wilt never repine
Leaving the land of haunted Rhine.
Here is a greeting, frank and free,
Waiting thee, princess, over sea!

Punch.

HOUR GLASSES.—Old Father Time's spectacles. Yet they're his, not our glasses.

Punch.

A PAIR OF ANTI-VIVISECTIONISTS.

SIR SLANGSBY JAUNTER: "See that old fellow, Miss Diana? That's Doctor Katchett, who swears he's going to find a cure for lunatics. Just got into trouble. Been trying the effects of extreme terror and bodily fatigue on a rabbit, and without chloroform, too, the old ruffian! And then he killed it and dissected its brain. Going to be had up before the beak for it. Bow Street, you know!"

MISS DIANA: "Serve him right, horrid man! Don't want to know about such people. But talking of rabbits, what a splendid run that second hare gave us to-day! Thirty minutes' gallop without a check! Wasn't it lovely? And I was in at the death!" Punch.

BY A KYRLE'D DARLING.

Out of compliment to Princess Helen of Waldeck and Prince Leopold, every bachelor of the Albany, if he doesn't immediately get married, will at once go in aesthetically for Wall-decorations. Of course there will be plenty of Waldeck-ornaments at the Royal Wedding Festivities.

Punch.

SIGN FOR A TAVERN IN CORAM STREET.—"Coram Publico."

Punch.

Is not every baby-linen warehouse proprietor interested in the "early clothesning movement"?

Moonshine.

A TEMPORARY EXPEDIENT.—The spur of the moment.

Moonshine.

How many did the thumb's crew consist of, and who was it that the centre, bit?

Moonshine.

A "BONE OF CONTENTION."—The jaw-bone.

Moonshine.

WHAT did the lark-spur, and what did the fox-glove?

Moonshine.

TURNERS.—Acrobats.

Moonshine.

THE HERITAGE OF WOE.

BROWN (who has been abroad): "I hear your uncle is dead. Inherited his whole fortune, I suppose?"

SMITH (who has been left a small annuity): "No, hang him! His misfortune."

BROWN: "His misfortune?"

SMITH: "Yes, his gout!" Moonshine.

A NEW SONG FOR CITY DINNERS.—"Oh, swallow, swallow."

Moonshine.

TRUE OR FALSE?

CHEAP JACK: "I give you my word and honour—and I would not tell you a lie—that the jewels and the gold are really real."

OLD TYKE: "Real-lie, eh?" Judy.

SINGULARLY ENOUGH

A PERSON may do a roaring trade if even he deals in dumb animals.

Most people act in direct opposition to their wishes when they get up to come down to breakfast.

Stage traps are never baited.

"Dumb" waiters "answer."

You do not require any knowledge of poultry killing for (w)ringing the necks-t door neighbour's bell.

And, most singular of all, a profit can be made, and a good one to boot, by selling sovereign remedies for a shilling. Judy.

ON HAVERSTOCK HILL.

'ARRY JOKINGS: "Why do you 'av three 'orses to take the bus down 'ill?"

DRIVER (after long pause): "Do you think we leave all the extra 'orses up at the top?"

'ARRY JOKINGS: "That 'ud be 'Av-er-stock-on-the-top-o'-the-hill, wouldn't it? Hay? Ah? ah! ah!" Judy.

COMING TO NAUGHT.

SHE: "What do they mean by one love, two love, at billiards?"

HE: "Oh, love means nothing."

SHE: "Oh, I see, love's like nothing."

HE: "Yes; nothing's like love." Fun.

IN FOR A DIG.

A CHIMNEY sweep named John Wright has been charged with stealing £200s. from his employer, who had engaged him to hoe a plantation. The prosecutor, it appears, kept his money in a jar buried in the ground which the prisoner hoed, and after he had finished the amount was missing. As the land which the man had dug up was a raspberry plantation, we suppose he regarded the money that he found as the fruit of his labours, and forthwith transplanted it to his "diggings." The man was Wright but his conduct wasn't. Fun.

"You took a lode off my mind," as the seller of a worthless mine said to the speculative purchaser. Fun.

A "MURKIN" ON YOUR FORECASTS.

AN observant tourist lately returned from Switzerland says it is a sign of more rain to see a moor-hen alighting on the moraine of a glacier. Fun.

A MEDIUM JOKE.

In which part of the house would mesmeric operations be conducted with the greatest probability of success?—In the en-trance-all. Fun.

FUNNY FUNDS.

WHAT Latin phrase is used by a Three-per-Cent Consol, in his sweet simplicity, when he attains a fraction beyond 100?—"Par-i-pass-u." Fun.

MOTTO FOR AN AUTHOR.—"In illa lachrymal." Fun.

A BOX OF TOOLS.

AWL guarded by a file of men,
Within a hollow square.

Drawn up upon a grassy plane,
I saw the mosqueau.
Graver his aspect as each moment passed
And neared the hour decreed to be his last.

Fun.

SCIENTIFIC TOY.

A DR. MIKULIEZ, of Vienna, is said to have lately invented an instrument for illuminating and inspecting the inside of a living human stomach, and he calls it the gastroscope. This is very wonderful, no doubt, yet it does not appear to effect anything that was not possible before, for it has been known from time immemorial that you could always look inside a man when he had a pane in his stomach.

Fun.

COMMERCIAL MEM.

ALL branches of industry have their seasons of depression alternating with periods of abnormal activity, but the one which bears the palm in this respect is the balus-trade, for it knows more ups and downs than any other of our acquaintances.

Fun.

"FITT 'TIS 'TIS TRUE."

A CONTEMPORARY has recently been enlightening us as to "How the Poor Live." Judged by the revelations at an inquest last week, a superior series of articles might be penned with the taking title "How the Poor Die." The poor creature in question for ten years had gained a livelihood by selling groundsel, but succumbed from the continued want of the common necessities of life. The natural question is, "Where was the relieving officer?" At the workhouse, of course; but we suppose the poorman thought it was useless to send to him. These gentlemen, instead of dispensing assistance, dispense with it.

Fun.

WHAT Mr. Fawcett said when he heard of the diamond robbery: "Oh, Gemini!"

Funny Folks.

BOY-COTTED.—The melodious juvenile who sang "Put me in my little bed."

Funny Folks.

A GLEE FOR A SMOKING CONCERT.—"The Breath of the Briar."

Funny Folks.

A DRAUGHT BOARD.—An alehouse bench.

Funny Folks.

"NATURAL SELECTION."

RESTAURANT WAITER: "Champagne, ms'r? Ye's. Vat brand?"

HEBRAIC CUSTOMER: "Vell, let it be some think good—somethink in the 'Mo'-et or 'Jew'-et line."

Funny Folks.

REVOLVER PRACTICE.—Learning to turn somersaults.

Funny Folks.

THOUGHTLESS GIRL!

A CALIFORNIAN paper tells a story of a champion lady swimmer who, while disporting in the water, met a seal, flew past, and beat it easily. The foolish girl swam away from the seal, and never thought of getting the loan of its jacket.

Funny Folks.

"A LITTLE DINNER."—Tommy with his first drum.

Funny Folks.

A BOND OF FATE.

A NEW NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A Winsome Wife," "So Fair Her Face," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XLIII.

ON THE ROAD TO VENGEANCE.

And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.

"My dear Kathleen, I am sure you must be ill."

"No."

Miss Esmond flung the monosyllable rather

shortly at Lady Hester; she was sitting in the window of their saloon at Ems, watching eagerly for something or someone.

Lady Hester wondered much who or what. It could not be for Chester Dalton, for he had only just left them, and they had few acquaintances there to whom Miss Esmond even cared to be civil.

The strain on the evil brain was getting too severe. There were only a few days now and all would be well. Mr. Dalton had consented to the marriage in silence and secrecy—not even Lady Hester was to know anything about it; and then they would go far away, to Egypt, the Nile, the end of the world, anywhere so they got away from conventionality and the bore of fashionable life.

That was how Kathleen put it. Her admirer little thought of the weary load of crime and anxiety from which she wanted to run away, and how to hide herself from herself was her moving motive—not love for him.

"I shall be safe! safe!" she was saying to herself when Lady Hester spoke to her, and her face had worn such a strange look of dread and white weariness that the sight of it had prompted the old lady's question.

"What makes you think I am ill?" she asked, sharply.

She always spoke sharply now, but her companion did not mind it. She knew the term of her bondage. Kathleen once safely married she would find a new home.

Gerard Montague had asked her to superintend his house for him. He and his bride were going on a prolonged tour, and the young lady's health was very delicate, and if Lady Hester would not mind a humdrum home they would be very glad to receive her.

Such had been the tenor of the letter which had brought tears of thankfulness to the poor lady's eyes when she read it, for she had been casting about what she should do that would help her darling boy when Miss Esmond was married.

To do the bride-elect justice she had been very anxious too as to what was to become of Lady Hester, and she was really thankful when Mr. Montague's offer arrived and was so gratefully accepted.

"I am not ill," she went on, "but I am watching—"

"What for, my dear?"

"The man with the English papers. How late he is."

"Is he? I think that it is hardly his hour yet. What makes you so anxious for news? You don't generally care for the paper."

"I don't know. My journey to—Paris has made me crave for any tidings of England, I think. I seemed so close at home when I was there. I long to see an English paper and to read all the stupid details of everyday life in dear old London."

Lady Hester looked at her in wonderment. She was over tired and hysterical she thought. She had arrived late the night before, and this odd frame of mind was the outcome of her weariness, doubtless.

Presently the man with the papers appeared in front of the window, and Kathleen beckoned to him eagerly. A paper was soon procured. Not one, but three—all the English papers he had—"Times," "Telegraph," and "Standard," and Miss Esmond retired with them to her seat in the window.

"You won't mind waiting while I look for something?" she said to her companion. "I'll look through the 'Times' first, and then you shall have that to go on with."

If Lady Hester had minded ever so much it would have been all the same. Miss Esmond would have kept the papers beside her till she had done with them. She scanned every column of the "Times" up and down with a look in her face that Lady Hester was unable to comprehend. She had never seen such an expression there before. It was a mixture of eagerness

and dread, as if she both hoped and feared to find something of importance there.

"There's the 'Times' she said, presently, tossing it across to where her companion sat. "Can you reach it? I am far too lazy to get up and give it to you properly."

It had fallen close to Lady Hester's feet and she picked it up, and was soon absorbed in its contents. An English newspaper was a treat to her, and if the "Times" was somewhat dry it savoured of home for all that.

Kathleen Esmond glanced towards her once or twice.

"Can I have missed it?" she said to herself. "Is it possible that I have overlooked anything and that she will come across it first? Pshaw! What an idiot I am. If there is any paragraph there that has an interest for me she will not understand it. There will be nothing about Paul Geldart in it, and if there were she would hardly remember his name."

There was nothing in the "Telegraph" that intimately concerned her, and she evidently did not find in it what she sought, nor in the "Standard" either, for her face wore a look of something like disappointment.

"Surely it would have been noticed," she said to herself; "they put far more trivial things than a sudden death into the papers now-a-days. I suppose there was no one there to send the news. It will appear to-morrow. I shall know, and then—"

She was not satisfied even now, but she spent part of the afternoon in hunting through all the details of crime and misery that the three papers recorded before she was satisfied that the record of Paul Geldart's death was not amongst them.

"Perhaps he did not go home that evening," she thought. "He was erratic in his movements, and after all why should I wish to read about it? It would only unnerve me; make me unfit for what is before me—my new life with the husband of my choice; with Chester Dalton," and her lip curled scornfully as she forced the sentence in her mind. "All I want in my wedded bliss is safety and the shield of a husband's name."

"Kathleen, my dear."

Lady Hester spoke somewhat suddenly from behind the paper. She seldom called Miss Esmond Kathleen now, unless she was going to speak of something which deeply interested her. The young lady looked up inquiringly from the seat in the window.

"What is it?" she asked, somewhat listlessly.

"There's a case in the 'Times' here," the old lady said, "that makes me want to give you a word of advice, my dear. It arises from a want of confidence between two newly married people. You won't wait till after you are married, will you, to tell Mr. Dalton the true state of your affairs?"

Kathleen Esmond opened her eyes very wide indeed and stared at her companion.

"The true state of my affairs!" she said, with a little laugh. "I don't think I know quite what you mean, Lady Hester."

"I think you do, my dear. I mean your money difficulties."

"And who said I had any?"

"It is impossible to live with you and not know it," the elder lady said, quietly. "I have seen it for a long time, my dear. Don't go to your new home with deceit in your actions if not on your lips."

"You assume a little too much, Lady Hester."

"I am sorry to think you feel it so, my dear."

"I don't mean in the sense of presuming, but you have put little things together that are nothing in themselves but which seem to make a mighty whole. I assure you there is nothing of the sort—my affairs are as prosperous as ever."

Her chaperon looked at her and did not see the lie in her face. She hardly knew, this sup-

posed rich woman, how to pay the sum that would be due when Lady Hester left her, and she had begun to tremble at the sound of a strange footstep and the sight of a strange handwriting, so involved was she.

"And by what right do you accuse me of secrecy to Chester?" she asked, presently. "He would be hurt, poor fellow, if he knew you thought me capable of it."

"I know how high an opinion he has of you, and I hope from my heart that it is not misplaced."

"Now if I were not very fond of you I should call that a very unkind speech," Miss Esmond said. "Set your dear old heart at rest; Chester knows all there is to be told—I have kept no secrets from him."

"Not a debt?"

"Not one."

"I am glad to think that—very glad; I feared the contrary. There can be no such misunderstanding afterwards as I was reading of just now between a couple newly married. There should never be secrets between a man and his wife, especially money secrets. You will forgive my speaking on the subject."

"Certainly; you only spoke in your love and care for me," Miss Esmond said, and the subject dropped as far as Lady Hester was concerned. Kathleen thought of it bitterly and often enough. She knew very well that even Chester Dalton's great love would hardly bear what she ought to tell him about her money affairs—he would never endure the deceit and subterfuge that she had been guilty of.

The money itself would not signify so much perhaps, but the knowledge that the magnificent dress that she had ordered for her wedding and which would never be worn at that ceremony now, was not paid for and never would be unless by him, would be quite sufficient to turn him away from her and make him despise her as much as he loved and revered her now.

"He will never know till it is too late for him to draw back," she said to herself, as Lady Hester left the room. "I have stopped that meddling old busybody's mouth by telling her Chester knew. Oh, that Saturday were over and I away."

Saturday was the day fixed for their clandestine union, and this was Thursday. Mr. Dalton had gone to make the necessary arrangements, paying pretty heavily for the silence of all concerned.

Only one more day to get over and then the next morning would see her Chester Dalton's wife, and she would trust to chance to get out of her difficulties afterwards.

The bridegroom elect came in presently radiant with happiness. He had managed everything so much better than he expected, and found someone who quite entered into the spirit of the thing, and would see that the carriage and horses were waiting for them at the appointed place.

Miss Esmond was to pack her boxes and leave them ready, and they would have them sent to meet them en route at a place they should agree upon afterwards.

"When all the explosion is over," Kathleen said. "I am thankful we shall be away out of it. I can fancy all the gossip and scandal there will be."

"And we can laugh at it from afar," he said, tenderly. "I think we had better show ourselves at the ball to-morrow night, darling, don't you?"

"As you please. I shan't mind for a little while."

There was a ball held weekly in the Conversation Haus, and nearly all the visitors attended it. It was the grand gathering for gossip and small talk, and if anyone suspected there was anything unusual on the tapis between Chester Dalton and his fiancée their being together at the ball would avert suspicion and still everybody's tongue.

Kathleen Esmond's appearance that night was long remembered. For some reason best known

to herself she had chosen to array herself in her choicest apparel, and swept into the ballroom on Chester Dalton's arm decked out in ruby velvet and with diamonds flashing about her like stolen stars. Her face wore its sunniest smiles, and her eyes flashed with a brilliance that had been foreign to them of late.

She and her maid best knew what arts she had employed to restore her beauty, which had seemed something on the wane of late. But the colour in her cheeks was exquisite, seeming to flush through the delicate skin.

She was the observed of all observers, and her card was soon full. It was a renewal of her old triumphs, and her eyes flashed more proudly yet as she thought how her power was still great to lure men to her side and hold them there as long as her fancy pleased.

"Not till we have one in our own house to celebrate our home-coming," Chester Dalton said, "six months hence or so. It will be something different from this tawdry affair. I have consulted my steward about it already."

"Isn't that something like reckoning your chickens before they are hatched?" said Kathleen, with a little laugh. "Who knows where we may all be six months hence?"

"I know where I intend to be if I am alive," Mr. Dalton said, "and where you shall be too, my darling. This is our quadrille, my bonnie Kate. Are you not too tired to dance it?"

"Not I. I rather like a quadrille, especially the Lancers. I am afraid I am rather partial to seeing the mistakes that people make and the tangles they get themselves into in trying to get out of them. We'll dance it by all means, Chester. You won't blunder, I know."

Mr. Dalton was a very good dancer and had a head for the most intricate figures, if for very little else, and Kathleen knew very well that her beauty and grace would show to advantage piloted by him.

He had been in hopes that she would prefer sitting out the tiresome Lancers and talk to him in the conservatory, where the coloured lamps made weird and fitful light, and where were seats and coolness very acceptable after the heat and bustle of the ballroom.

But Miss Esmond did not want a tête-à-tête with her betrothed. She had long ago exhausted all the subjects of conversation that he was possessed of, and had sucked him dry, as it were, to her own weariness and disgust, and whenever she could decently get out of any prolonged interview with him she did so deftly and cleverly.

She dreaded the approaching honeymoon with a dread only known to herself, but she solaced herself with the idea that she should meet English people in her journeys, and that she could enliven the tedium of her existence by intercourse with someone besides her husband.

She had the grace to be ashamed of her feelings sometimes, and to wish that she could give her faithful slave something besides the very cold feeling with which she was regarding the "happiest day of her life."

"I really am tired now, Chester," she said, gently, after the Lancers had been somewhat riotously danced and they had all come out of the final gallop ruffled and panting, "and, oh! so hot. Let us sit down in the conservatory for a little while. There is no one there."

"You are never ruffled, my own Kathleen," the young said, lovingly. "You look as fresh now as if you had not danced a step all night."

"Do I? I wish I felt so. Certainly I don't look quite so dishevelled as those girls," pointing to a couple of damsels, whose light gauze dresses had suffered considerably in the scamper and whose hair and adornments looked as though they had been in the very thickest of the fray, "but then I don't wear my hair loose and my dress is too heavy to be disturbed by the wildest romp. I should look just like that if I dressed myself as they do."

He pressed her arm affectionately and led her into the conservatory, intoxicated by her marvellous beauty and his own good luck in winning such a glorious creature to be his wife.

They sat together in the soft light of the many-coloured lamps, which hid the daylight shabbiness of the scene, and chatted of their future and of the bliss the morrow was to bring. He had arranged everything. Kathleen was to meet him at a place he named with a travelling bag at a given time, long before anyone who was at the ball would be stirring.

Then they were to go to the registry office, or what answered to it in Germany, and be quietly married—he had witnesses ready provided—and then to the railway station, and so away to the future of their two lives. A note was to be left for Lady Hester and another for the young man's mother would be posted before they left Ems. The matter would only be a nine days' wonder for the gossip-mongers.

They were both of age, and there was nothing to prevent them from doing as they chose.

The only reason Miss Esmond gave for her eccentric wish was that she desired to avoid all publicity and gossip. She was sick of being the object of remark, she said, and she wanted to be a little different from other people.

She hated the conventionality of bridesmaids and groomsmen, she declared; all she wanted was Chester himself, and he believed the soft look that came into her eyes as she said it, and little dreamed of the horrible dread that was at her heart as she talked to him about it that someone would rise up and prevent their marriage if the world knew of it.

There was no reason for that dread now, she told herself as she sat by his side with the strains from the ball-room ringing in their ears and the soft plashing of the little fountain in the middle of the conservatory making an agreeable coolness after the heat and dust of the saloon.

She had made all things sure in that quarter. Paul Geldart would never trouble her again, and no one would ever know how she wanted had come about. The little girl who let her into his landlady's house had never seen her face, she told herself, and not a soul beside knew of her visit; she had left no trace of her presence, and all was well.

She had certainly seen no news of any catastrophe in the papers, but the death of an obscure individual in lodgings was very easily overlooked. Mr. Pemberton would go and see about things and have his friend buried, and he would never come back to trouble her—never!

And here he was, looking through a little window, half hidden by creeping foliage outside, looking straight at her with a mixed expression of anger and sorrow on his handsome face!

She started up, every trace of colour dying out of her face and leaving it white to the lips and choking in her throat that prevented her from uttering a word.

"What is it? Kathleen, my darling, speak to me!" exclaimed Chester Dalton, alarmed beyond measure at her appearance, and putting his arm round her, for she swayed as if she should fall. "What are you looking at in that awful way?"

"At him! See there, Chester, at that window!"

"There's no one there, dear," he said, looking at the window in question, through which the moonbeams were streaming now uninterruptedly. "You are over-tired and excited. You fancied something."

"No, no, it was no fancy. He was there, I tell you—there himself, warning me!"

"He! Who?—someone you know? Try and tell me, dear. If there was anybody there it was most likely some tramp or idler; no one that will harm you. Did you know the face?"

"No!" she said, recovering herself; "I did not know it—how should I? I only said a man; but it frightened me, Chester, and I am not easily frightened, and—don't let it come between us to-morrow, dear, and—"

Her voice was failing her, and he only just caught her in time to prevent her falling on the floor. He laid her down on the velvet-covered seat and dashed some water over her face. He had the sense to know that she would rather he called no one, and her swoon was not of long duration.

While he was attending to her he himself caught sight of a face peering in through the window she had indicated. But he did not recognise it, it was quite strange to him—some tramp or beggar as he thought—and he resolved to tell some of the attendants and have the premises searched.

In a very few minutes Kathleen was herself again, except for a wan look about her eyes which she could not smile away, and she went back to the ball-room, declaring herself well again.

"I'll take you to Lady Hester, my darling," he said, "and then I will go and see about someone to look after that fellow, whoever he was. I saw him too."

"Did you? Did you know him, Chester?"

"Know him, darling! That was very unlikely," Mr. Dalton replied. "Whoever he is must be turned out of the grounds, or we shall most likely hear of some robbery."

"No, no!" she gasped. "Let him alone; it was nothing; don't make a fuss; you will find no one."

She was so incoherent and seemed so agitated that he thought it best not to say any more, and gave a hasty assent to what she said, resolving nevertheless to find out who and what the man was whom he as well as Kathleen had seen.

She would not go home, but insisted on dancing out her engagements, though it was evident that she was scarcely able to do so, and he took the opportunity of her being claimed by another partner to go and acquaint the guardians of the place with what he had seen.

He was assured that it was impossible for any man to get to the place where he had described the man as looking in; but they searched to oblige him, and certainly did find the traces of footsteps on the mould of the flower-beds, and the trees against the wall were broken, as if someone had attempted to use them as a means of support.

All traces of the intruder beyond these useless ones had vanished, and who or what he was remained a mystery.

Only Kathleen Esmond knew, and her lips were sealed on the subject. Whether she had seen a phantom, or Paul Geldart in the flesh, or whether she had given some other man his face in the intensity of her terror remained to be proved.

CHAPTER XLV.

FACE TO FACE.

Facts are circles that widen a-ding,
And downa be disputed.

The morning after the ball turned out wet and cold, a miserable mingling of grey sky and muddy earth, and Kathleen Esmond's heart almost failed her as she stood before the glass in her dressing-room, attire herself rapidly and silently for her hurried and secret marriage.

She looked very old and haggard in the dim, uncertain light, and there were dark lines under her eyes, telling of a vigil of thought and anxiety.

She had left the ball-room even before the early hour at which such assemblies come to an end in Germany, and had been more than usually quiet and reserved afterwards, so that Lady Hester had not to sit up and gossip about the people they had met, as Miss Esmond sometimes made her do.

Kathleen would not have her maid's services; she dismissed her as soon as the velvet dress with its superb addenda was taken off.

She could do her hair herself, she said, and the girl need not wait. She had no preparations to make, everything was ready, even to the packing of her bag, and when the girl was gone she sat down by the fire in her dressing-room and thought.

"Shall I ever wear that dress again?" she said to herself, "or anything like it? Shall I ever go to Chester Dalton's home his loved and honoured wife as he promises? Bah! what have I to fear? A trick of my own imagination! a shadow! fancy that I ought to be ashamed of entertaining for a moment. I am safe and free, and I can face all that will come after to-morrow."

She lay down on her bed, dressed as she was, for a little while. She was one of those lucky people who have the faculty of sleeping at will, and she knew that she should wake at the necessary time.

She did so, feeling sick and shuddering, the effect of lying down in her clothes, and she fortified herself with a tiny taste of brandy out of her travelling flask. It was only a sip, but it had the desired effect, and her teeth ceased chattering and a little colour came back into her cheeks.

She was terribly afraid that some of the servants would see her go out, for though it was

early morning for those who had been at the ball it was the ordinary time for the early-rising German domestics to be about their work, and she wished to attract no attention, if possible.

No one noticed her; the figure in the grey cloak and quiet hat was not particularly striking, and many ladies went out early to the waters, so she reached the place where Chester Dalton was waiting for her unperceived.

They had some little distance to go; the place where they could be married was not in the fashionable part of Ems, and Chester Dalton had a cab waiting.

Kathleen felt as if she had left her own individuality and her old life behind her when they were shut up in it and driving away.

"You are all mine now, darling," the young man said, fondly, as he pressed her hand, wondering the while what his mother would say to it all when she got his note.

"Not yet, Chester; not for another half-hour," she replied, with an eerie feeling of unreality about it that she attributed to the cold, miserable morning and the depressing effect of getting up in that awkward fashion without breakfast or attendance.

She was pretty well used to attend on herself. Her life in America had not afforded maid; but she had grown a Sybarite of late in all matters connected with her toilette, and loved the comfortable surroundings of her later years with all her heart.

The office to which they went was a gloomy little place, and Kathleen thought there were more people in it than were necessary to be present at her wedding. There were two men sitting in a dark corner with their faces towards the newly made fire, deeply engaged in conversation. They did not look round as the pair entered. Doubtless they were there on business of their own and did not heed who came in.

Mr. Dalton made the officials of the place understand that the lady objected to their presence, but that gentleman said very politely and with many apologies that he really could not turn them out. They had come on business and had a right to wait there.

"Never mind them, my darling," Chester Dalton said, "they will not pay any attention. We are ready, sir."

They stood before the proper official for their marriage with its "maimed rights," and he began to put the questions demanded by the formula. Asked if there were any impediment on his side to the match, the bridegroom declared emphatically that there was none, and then the bride was interrogated next and gave her denial in the same decided manner.

Her colour changed a little as she spoke, and she looked nervously round as if she expected her assertion to be denied.

She was not disappointed.

A voice from the corner where the two men sat said, clearly and distinctly:

"A lie!"

The speaker rose and came forward as he uttered the words, and Kathleen Esmond fell forward on the floor like one dead.

All was confusion in a moment, and Chester Dalton's heart seemed to stand still as he recognised in the other man who rose and came forward with the speaker, Mr. Pemberton, of the Garden House.

"Don't touch her, my boy," the old man said, with excusable familiarity, as the intending bridegroom would have raised the insensible form in his arms. "She is not fit for an honest man's hands to touch."

"She is to be my wife, sir," was the haughty retort. "By whose authority do you interfere? and who are you, sir?" turning to the other man, whose face he knew now he had seen the night before peeping into the conservatory window.

"Her husband," was the quiet reply.

And something in his face and Mr. Pemberton's sorrow-stricken expression told him the horrible words were true. But he would not believe them yet. He would not listen to anything against the woman to whom he had given his whole honest heart.

They had called assistance and raised her from



[THEY SAT TOGETHER IN THE SOFT LIGHT OF THE MANY-COLOURED LAMPS.]

the ground, but it was a significant fact that they would not lose sight of her even for a moment.

"It is false!" the young fellow said, in a harsh, strained voice. "I know all her life—its trials and its privations—till fortune smiled on her. You have invented this monstrous tale for some vile purpose of your own."

"I have no purpose to serve," said the quiet voice that so ruthlessly interrupted the ceremony. "You have heard of me, Mr. Dalton, I am Paul Geldart, and the woman lying there is my wife. Twice she has tried murder to get rid of me. I have ample proof of both efforts, and twice has a merciful Providence interposed to save me. But I will say no more. There is no need to harass you with the catalogue of that woman's sins. We have saved you from a fate worse than death—the fate of a man tied for life to a heartless, wicked woman."

"I can't believe it! I won't believe it!" the poor young fellow said. "It is too horrible!"

"It is true, every word," Mr. Pemberton said. "Look at her, she cannot deny it."

"Look at her! Ay, would he! Go to her and take her hand and implore her to say that this man had spoken falsely and call her his darling and beg her to help him to shake off this frightful nightmare and give these men the lie. She had come to her senses again now, and she looked at him with a stony stare.

"She cannot deny it—she will not," Paul Geldart said. "She is the woman I married in America as Zara Peterovski. There she only tried to murder me in the night in a clumsy, assassin-like way; she left her ring in my hand and the weapon with which she attempted the deed on the bed where I lay. This last time she was more subtle and tried a madhouse first—I escaped through the help of this good friend here, who has stood by me all along. But I was not safe from her even then. Four days ago in my lodging in London—she told you she was going to Paris, I have learned that much—she mixed such a dose of subtle poison with some-

thing she knew I should drink, that mine would have been a short shrift had I taken anything out of that bottle. Luckily for me, unluckily for her, she dropped her glove in my apartment, and the scent on the senseless thing told me I had had a visit from my wife. I tried an experiment with the liquor she had left for me—a teaspoonful of it killed a healthy cat in less than a minute, and I should have taken a good many teaspoonfuls."

He uttered all these hard, bitter truths in a cold, measured voice, looking straight at the wretched woman, who cowered in her corner, neither speaking nor moving.

"She does not deny it," he said, quietly. "Question her for yourself, she will not dare deny what I have said."

"Kathleen, is it true?"

Chester Dalton put the question in the shrill tone that tells of agony almost too great to be borne, and she looked up at him with something of remorse in her face.

"Yes," she said, "I am his wife. The fates are against me. Curse me, Chester, and go."

"I cannot curse you," he said, in a broken voice, "I have loved you too dearly. God forgive you, Kathleen, as I do."

There was a slight bustle at the door, and a lady came in hurriedly and laid her hand on Chester Dalton's shoulder.

"Mother!" he cried, in amazement. "You here!"

"Yes, my boy—here to save you," the lady replied. "Tell me, am I too late? You cannot marry that woman. Ah, Chester, my instinct was a true one when my heart rejected her."

"Set your heart at rest, mother, there has been no marriage."

"Thank Heaven for that. You know all then?"

"All I want to know. Mother, I will go back with you to Wiesbaden, Ems is no place for me now. Don't say any more to me just yet, I cannot bear it now. You have cut me to the heart, gentlemen," he said, turning to the two men, who pitied him with exceeding pity,

"but I thank you. The disclosure must have come some time, and it was better it should come now."

He turned out of the office with his mother, and Kathleen Esmond covered her guilty face with her hands and groaned aloud. The end had come—the very end she dreaded—to her brief prosperity; all her gauds and fripperies had fallen from her now, and her husband stood beside her like an avenging angel to drive her into outer darkness.

"Well," she said, sullenly, after a pause, "what are you going to do with me—do you want your wife, Paul Geldart?"

"No."

"But my fate rests with you."

"Hardly, madam," said a grave official, coming close to her side, "it rests with the law where so grave a charge as that of attempted murder is concerned."

Eme had something to talk about before the day was over. Miss Esmond had suddenly disappeared from her apartments, leaving a note for Lady Hester saying that she had gone to be married to Mr. Dalton quietly, and instead of that the gentleman had disappeared and the lady was said to be under arrest on a charge of attempted murder.

It was something for the German watering-place to busy itself about, and gossip ran high. The miserable story was soon all over the place and in the English newspapers, and everybody immediately found out that they had suspected the lady all along of being an adventuress, and had looked upon Chester Dalton as a fool for having anything to do with her.

But astonishment reached its climax the next day when the papers had something else to chronicle—an amazing paragraph appeared announcing in large type that the heroine of the wonderful romance was dead—the end of it all had come, and there would never be any explanation of the amazing events which had led to her exposure and downfall.

(To be Continued.)



[TURNING, HE SAW A THIRD FIGURE—IT WAS SIR ELWIN.]

THE
GREY TOWERS MYSTERY;
OR,
BARBARA'S SACRIFICE.

CHAPTER III.

AN AWKWARD RECONTEE.

HETTY's summary of Miss Roberta's character was a tolerably correct one. Though strict and fidgety she was just and kind, and did her utmost to make the girls feel at home at Grey Towers.

The evening they arrived she told them they would have a clear week in which to do as they pleased, and to ramble over the fine old house and grounds at will; then she should expect them to help her in such duties as writing letters, keeping accounts, and attending to the wants of some pensioners among the poor in the village.

Only once was her manner sharp and decided, as she replied to Barbara and Hester's gratefully-uttered acknowledgment of the kindness she had shown them.

"I do not wish for thanks, I had my reasons for acting as I did. Some day you will know them. Meanwhile be content, and do not overwhelm me with gratitude which I do not deserve. As I told you in my letter, I have but done my duty, nieces Barbara and Hester."

The full force of her words did not strike them at the time, though a day was to come when the memory of them would be fraught with a strange, sad significance.

The next day the sisters explored the building and grounds with the deepest interest. They found that the old house tallied exactly with the description Patty had given, and was a most

picturesque building, full of unexpected nooks and corners.

Quaint oak carving adorned nearly every room and deep mulioned windows offered charming seats in which to read or dream away an idle hour.

On their journey of discovery the two came to certain doors which were locked, and which Patty, who was their cicerone, told them led into the haunted wing.

Looking out of the picture gallery window they saw the garden where so dreadful a tragedy had been enacted, its trees with branches gaunt and bare, bending under a weight of snow; and the Silent Pool, its waters now one black sheet of ice.

Hetty shuddered.

"Oh, come away," she cried, "it is enough to give one the blues to stand looking out on such a scene. Let us go down to the library and have a warm."

Miss Ray was seated by the fire knitting when her nieces entered. In spite of herself she was forced to own that the companionship of two nice, bright-looking girls was a pleasant change after the dull loneliness of her life at Grey Towers.

She had been wont to exclude herself too much from society, but now she felt matters must be different. Whatever her faults were Miss Roberta was just, and she knew that it was not fair that Barbara and Hester should be cut off from all the pleasures young people most enjoy.

She resolved, therefore, in future to accept some of the invitations she had formerly declined and return them also; thus once more taking, for her nieces' sakes, a position in county society. A letter she had received that morning had helped her to come to this determination.

She called the girls to her and told them about it, adding a running commentary of explanation.

"My friend Mrs. Bell, of Belminster Court," she said, "has heard that I have two nieces

staying with me, and writes to invite you both to join a skating party at her house next week. There is no reason why you should not go. The matter of costume can be easily arranged. And as to skating, if you are not proficient in the art there will be plenty of entertainment in watching the others."

Hester eagerly assured her they could both skate, and were very fond of that delightful amusement.

"So much the better. Then we will look on the matter as settled, and will drive into Colchester this afternoon to see about your dresses."

The girls were charmed at the idea of the party, and began to think Aunt Roberta quite a fairy godmother when they saw the liberality of her purchases for them that day. Her taste, too, they owned, was faultless, and the costumes she ordered of rich maroon velvet, with hats to match, were handsomer than anything the sisters had ever possessed.

Barbara was bending over a box of feathers, busily engaged in selecting one for her touque, when an exclamation of surprise from Hetty made her look up. Her sister was gazing fixedly at a gentleman who had entered the shop and was choosing driving-gloves at an opposite counter. Miss Roberta was upstairs in the show-room giving directions for herself, for it was many years since she had accepted a similar invitation, and she felt her wardrobe needed re-modelling a little more after the present fashion.

"Do you see who that is, Bab?" Hetty asked, hurriedly, in French.

"Yes, indeed I do. Oh, Hetty, how awkward! Who would have thought of meeting him again—and *HERE*?" Barbara replied, sotto voce, her cheeks crimson with vexation. "Hush! give no sign—he may not see us."

But the fates were unpropitious, for Miss Roberta at that moment descended from the show-room, and to her nieces' surprise the gentleman at the glove counter, raising his hat, advanced towards her with a look of pleased surprise.

"Miss Ray, surely? I am glad to see you out again. I thought you had become quite a recluse."

Aunt Roberta responded courteously, gratified, as the aged always are, by deference from those younger than themselves.

"Thanks, Sir Elwyn. I have been wonderfully well lately, whereas last year rheumatism kept me a close prisoner. But now I have an additional inducement to go out more—the company of two nieces who are living with me—and to whom I must introduce you," she added, graciously.

Miss Ray led the way to the counter where Barbara and Hester were still engaged.

There was no help for it, Barbara felt. What was to be done? Her clear common sense came to the rescue. After all, there was nothing to be ashamed of. Hetty had acted thoughtlessly, and in doing so had placed Barbara in a false position, but it was scarcely fair to blame Sir Elwyn for this. As these thoughts flashed like lightning through her brain her mind was made up.

"The most straightforward course is best," she said to herself.

"These are my nieces, Barbara and Hester—Sir Elwyn Ormerod!"

To Barbara's astonishment the baronet bowed as he might have done to utter strangers. Smiling courteously he uttered some of the meaningless platitudes usual on such occasions, but his face wore no appearance of surprise, and his eyes had no gleam of recognition in them.

"I might have spared my fears," the girl thought, with a feeling of mortification for which she was vexed with herself. "He has apparently quite forgotten us."

But having laid down her course of action Barbara would not depart from it.

"I think we have met Sir Elwyn Ormerod before," she said, quietly, "though he does not recollect us."

Miss Roberta looked puzzled for a minute, but, after all, why should it not be? Archibald Ray was an artist—had doubtless possessed acquaintance in all ranks of life. It was thus, perhaps, the young people had met. Looking from one to the other she awaited an explanation.

"A thousand pardons. Now I hear you speak I remember perfectly well. Dear me! You must have thought me very rude."

The baronet's manner was perfect as he turned to Miss Roberta, saying:

"I am honoured by Miss Barbara Ray's recognition. It is true that I had the pleasure of meeting her and Miss Hester once in town and am delighted to renew the acquaintance. You will allow me to call on you in Grey Towers? Thanks. Then I will drive Madge over one day. Have you seen her new ponies? No? Oh! you really ought; they are little gems, and splendid ones to go."

Barbara was grateful to Sir Elwyn, as he stood chatting easily to Miss Roberta, for she felt all had passed off well, without any awkward explanation.

In this opinion she was subsequently confirmed, for, unlike some old ladies, Miss Ray was not suspicious or inquisitive, and Barbara's open recognition of the baronet had shown there was nothing to conceal. Sir Elwyn's words had seemed to confirm her conjectures, and she asked no questions, much to Barbara's relief, as to when and how the sisters had made his acquaintance.

Perhaps she was partly actuated by the desire to avoid any topic that might introduce the name of Archibald Ray, for though she had written of him to his daughters in a manner that showed she had never quite forgiven his treatment of the father she had loved so dearly, yet she had refrained from speaking unkindly of him, being unwilling to wound her nieces' feelings.

As the party drove home to Grey Towers Miss Roberta descended on the merits of Sir Elwyn Ormerod.

"He is a man who has acted as not one in a thousand would have done," she said, "and I think it an honour to call him my friend. His

father, Sir Maurice Ormerod, was a dissolute roué and gambler, who died when his son was a boy, leaving the family estate of Beechlands, in the village of Belminster, heavily encumbered. By his self-denial and economy Sir Elwyn has cleared off many of the debts which threatened the noble property, and the marriage portion which his cousin, Margaret Bell, will bring him will complete the good work and prevent the estate from passing into the hands of strangers. Though this is fortunate for Sir Elwyn he cannot be accused of mercenary motives, for he and Margaret have been engaged almost since they were children, and I believe it is in every way a love match. By-the-bye, you will see her next week, for it is at her mother's house the skating party will be held. She is a handsome, high-spirited girl—perhaps not a pattern for you in all things, nieces; but I have known her from a child, and do not think there is any real harm in her. When she is Lady Ormerod she will be less giddy and thoughtless, I daresay."

Barbara listened with interest to these details, and would gladly have gleaned more information respecting the baronet's fiancée, and perhaps about himself, though she would have been loth to confess it. But the cold and unwonted fatigue of shopping had made Miss Roberta drowsy, and after the above explanation she nodded so easily in her corner that Barbara did not like to disturb her.

Hetty and she, therefore, conversed in undertones upon the events of the afternoon till they had reached the Towers, agreeing that it would not be necessary, to enlighten their aunt further about the baronet's visit to Queen Mary Street, for though she had shown herself anything but the strait-laced duenna they had expected it was by no means certain she would look upon an acquaintance made in such a manner with approval.

The lake at Belminster presented a gay and picturesque scene on the day of the skating party. Graceful girls, clad in velvet and furs, with their attendant cavaliers, skinned swiftly over the broad, glassy surface, executing strange evolutions, the most accomplished skaters attempting a quadrille, which was watched with great interest by the spectators gathered on the bank.

Many of the chaperons, fearing the intense cold and pressed by hospitable Mr. Bell, had withdrawn to the house, where hot coffee and other refreshments were served; so the young people had matters much their own way. Great was the fun and merriment—many the tender glances and hand-pressure exchanged under plea of assistance on the ice's slippery surface. Margaret Bell, a handsome, sparkling brunette, clad in a striking costume of brown and amber velvet, was the centre of a small crowd of admirers. Her fiancée, Sir Elwyn, could hardly exchange a word with her and felt annoyed at the undisguised pleasure with which she accepted the adoration of her followers. He watched his opportunity, and, skating near, bent down and whispered:

"Come for a turn with me, Madge. I don't like to see you with those fellows. You have avoided me all the afternoon. Why is it, dear?"

She shrugged her shoulders with a petulant movement, and darted a glance of vexation from her brilliant, dark eyes, but they fell under his steady gaze as she replied:

"Elwyn, how silly you are, fancying things and spoiling my enjoyment. Of course, we can't go spinning about on the ice together all the time. It would look ridiculous. Though we are engaged I hate a parade of fondness before a lot of people. Do be sensible; go and talk to the Miss Rays, who are strangers, and make yourself useful. By-the-bye, old Miss Ray said something about your having met them in London once. So much the better. I need not trouble about introducing you."

"Are you coming, Miss Bell? We want you early for this quadrille."

Their colloquy was interrupted, as Raymond

Joyce, a young doctor, who had lately bought a practice in Belminster, skated up to them.

He was a bachelor, and consequently the object of many aspirations, for Belminster, like many other country villages, possessed more than its fair share of marriageable damsels, and several of them had lost their hearts to the large, sleepy blue eyes, regular features, and drooping blonde moustache of the new doctor.

But all the attentions in the way of parties, worked slippers, presents of fruit and game that had been lavished upon Raymond since his arrival seemed wasted.

He was coldly polite to all alike, and more mercilessly severe upon the fancied ailments and nervous attacks which now occurred with alarming frequency among the fair maidens of Belminster than his predecessor, old Doctor Harris. Unkind rumour said that in church his eyes were more often directed toward the Belminster Court pew than was quite comme il faut, and that a pair of dark orbs returned his glances with an audacious freedom hardly becoming in the affianced wife of a baronet.

But sensible people pooh-poohed such rubbish. Madge Bell was the handsomest girl in the parish, and as for the doctor, why, "a cat may look at a king." If he did admire her he was not singular in doing so—as to anything else, a pack of nonsense!

Everyone knew Miss Bell of the Court was as far removed in position from Dr. Joyce as the sky from the earth, and her engagement to Sir Elwyn Ormerod still further precluded the idea of such absurdity.

The doctor stood waiting a reply.

"Madge, you will not go?" said Elwyn, in a low tone, bowing coldly to Raymond, to whom he had taken an instinctive dislike from the first.

The baronet was a good physiognomist, and there was something not quite open in the doctor's handsome face—something cat-like and furtive in his half-closed blue eyes, which Sir Elwyn mistrusted.

"Why shouldn't I? Really you are most unreasonable," sotto voce.

Madge stood there, a sulky, half-defiant look on her countenance, which was far from agreeable.

"Oh, if Sir Elwyn objects—" began Raymond, politely.

The girl's spirit was roused at this. After all Elwyn was not her master yet, and she would prove as much.

"Objects?" she said, with a scornful emphasis that the doctor could not fail to notice. "He will hardly do that if I choose to join the quadrille, for he knows that if he did it would be useless."

"Your wishes are my law, as I hope Dr. Joyce and the world are aware," replied the baronet, with a pleasant smile.

Though deeply annoyed at the lamentable want of dignity and good taste Margaret had manifested, he was far too proud to show it, or to "wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at."

So he left the couple and skated lightly away in the direction of Barbara Ray, who was helping a little girl learner with great patience and good humour.

Hetty, taken indoors by her cavalier (one of the curates) for coffee, had remained there, for prolonged exercise still affected the ankle she had hurt in London.

"Marian, dear, you must come now, we are just going. Miss Ray, how kind of you to victimise yourself in this way, really I don't know how to thank you."

With many smiles and apologies the mother of the child Barbara had been helping bore down upon her offspring, who reluctantly took leave of her good-natured friend.

Barbara started off at a rapid pace to warm herself. It is chilly work teaching others to skate, as those who have done so probably know. As she was practising the "outward edge" in a corner by herself, Sir Elwyn Ormerod overtook her.

"Allow me, Miss Ray; you have been the teacher, now it is your turn to be pupil. I see

you have not got quite the right movement—near more to the side. Ah! that is better. Take my hand and let us go round together."

The two skated along gracefully and easily, the baronet exerting himself to please and amuse his fair companion. As Sir Elwyn had been a great traveller his conversation contained much that was entertaining to Barbara, and the baronet was delighted with the intelligence and interest displayed by his listener.

"How different to Madge," he could not help thinking. "She would have been bored, and would have told me to 'shut up' or something of the sort. How pleasant it is to find a woman one can really talk to, and who can understand one. I was not mistaken in the impression I had formed of her."

Take care, Sir Elwyn! You are near a perilous precipice, for though you thought a certain little romance was ended with the holocaust of Barbara's note, can you truly say the past was forgotten, or that the memory of the hazel eyes into which you are now looking so tenderly has not been far too often present with you?

And what of Barbara? She confesses to herself, with a strange pang at her heart, that she is happy beyond measure. Never before has she found anyone who seemed so thoroughly to gauge the inner depths of her nature, and to share her sympathies and interests so perfectly.

Once, conscience-stricken, she looked towards the quadrille party. Sir Elwyn saw the glance, and was quick to interpret it.

"You need not fear," he said. "Miss Bell does not wish for my society. She has apparently forgotten my very existence."

He laughed bitterly as the sound of Madge's ringing laugh was borne to them across the ice.

"Ah, well! Miss Bell is not the only person in the world troubled with a short memory, Sir Elwyn."

Barbara threw a meaning accent into her voice as she said this, but if she wished to check with a jest the somewhat awkward turn their conversation was taking she failed. Sir Elwyn looked searchingly at her.

"Good heavens! you really believed that I did not recognise you that day?"

His tone was eager and incredulous.

"Why should I doubt it? You had only seen us once, and under such different circumstances. How could I wonder, especially as you must see so many people—?" Barbara began, getting incoherent and reddening.

This was out of the frying-pan into the fire, she felt. Sir Elwyn would think she had asked the question out of mere coquetry, and she must appear in his eyes as though seeking for compliments.

Oh! that Aunt Roberta would come and say that they must go before she entangled herself with more foolish speeches. At any rate, it was time to leave the ice, and so she told her companion, breaking off in her confused explanation. But he held her hand in a firm clasp as he replied:

"Miss Ray, before we part you must hear me. Do you know why I pretended not to know you? No? Then I will tell you. It was that I feared my acquaintance might not be welcome, and I was determined not to use the advantage I possessed unfairly, but to give you the chance of ignoring our past rencontre if you chose. How pleased I felt when you did me the honour to acknowledge it, and how glad I was to find that you and Miss Hester were the nieces of Madge's old friend, I need hardly say. Remember, I told you I had heard your name before, but certainly had not associated it with Miss Roberta. Ah! parlez d'un ange—you know the rest—there she is with your sister on the bank. I will take you to her."

There was no time for more then, for Miss Ray was anxious to depart.

But if anything had been needed to strengthen the favourable impression Barbara had already received it was the delicate courtesy and consideration which she owned Sir Elwyn had shown to her.

"How I misjudged him! I fancied he was a

mere idler about town—a shallow-brained man of fashion; but I am mistaken. Poor fellow! I am sorry for him; I fear he is not happy, and yet he ought to be; surely he loves Miss Bell or wouldn't have chosen her to be his wife. Does she care for him, I wonder?" Barbara sighed; there was a dull pain at her heart for which she was angry with herself. "Why should I care? He is nothing to me," she reiterated, proudly, again and again.

Did naught remind her of the saying, well worn but none the less true, that pity is akin to love?

Slowly, surely, two hearts drawn by that most irresistible magnet were passing from the keeping of their respective owners, to be joined in a bond tender but indissoluble as adamant.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HAUNTED POOL.

The days wore on to Christmas-tide, and soft, fleecy snow covered the ground with a thick, impenetrable mantle, making the roads almost impassable and keeping all who were not young and robust within doors. A dull time for those who lacked occupation and were destitute of mental resources or congenial society.

Such was not the case at Grey Towers.

Miss Roberta, anxious to return some of the hospitality that had been shown to her nieces, had invited a party of young people to spend a week at the old house—it being her intention to give a dance on Christmas Eve. Among the guests were: Sir Elwyn Ormerod, Margaret Bell, and Doctor Joyce. The latter was rather a favourite of Miss Ray's, as he had shown great skill in treating her for her old enemy—the rheumatism.

Another visitor was the pleasant young curate who had been so attentive to Hetty on the ice, and who was decidedly "spoony" on that pretty maiden—little dreaming, alas! of the locket worn under her dress containing Arthur Marchmont's portrait, and the secret she shared alone with Barbara, who had been pleased to hear how matters stood between the couple, for she liked Arthur and felt she could trust Hetty to him.

Though Barbara saw the present necessity for secrecy respecting the engagement, she was sorry it could not be made public—*for*, thoroughly straightforward and right-thinking herself, she did not quite like the course matters were taking with regard to Mr. Wynne, the curate. Something of a coquette by nature, Hetty took pleasure in his evident admiration and did not altogether discourage it—*hence* a flirtation was going on between the pair which, though of a mild nature, Barbara felt was hardly fair to the absent Arthur.

Another thing also troubled the girl and made her wish that Christmas was over, and the new year, which was to witness Sir Elwyn's marriage to Madge Bell, fairly begun.

With a woman's unerring instinct she felt that the mutual liking which had sprung up between herself and the baronet on the day of the skating party was with daily contact strengthening into something deeper. Though she tried to avoid him, circumstances were continually occurring which threw them together. Was it accident or the hand of fate?

Sir Elwyn could not help asking himself this question when, unmoved by superstitious terrors, he was sauntering down the gallery near the haunted wing one evening, and saw Barbara standing looking out of the window at the end of it.

Knowing that particular end of the house was shunned by most people, Sir Elwyn had selected the long low passage hung with family portraits as a favourable place for quiet meditation upon an unpleasant matter. It was the unaccountable behaviour of his affianced wife and the singular intimacy which she persisted in maintaining, against the honest baronet's will, with Doctor Joyce.

Sir Elwyn had left the drawing-room, where Madge and the doctor, Hetty and Mr. Wynne

were busy practising quartettes and part songs, for he hated to see Madge engrossed by one he disliked and despised, though he could not pretend to care for her as a man ought for the woman who is to be his wife. Her conduct of late had thoroughly disgusted him and she was carrying her flirtation with the doctor almost beyond the verge of decorum, though so soon she was to stand a bride at the altar.

Sir Elwyn had resolved that he would not prevent her innocent enjoyment, and had borne much with great indulgence from the handsome, wilful girl; but matters were going too far—should he even now cancel his engagement, sell Beechlands and go abroad?

It would almost break Lady Ormerod's heart to part with the old place, he knew—but better that than to see a woman like Madge mistress of it and mother of his children.

At all events he would speak to the headstrong girl on the morrow and appeal finally to her better self—her sense of honour. If this failed, her liberty should be restored and he should be free. He had reached this point in his reflections when he turned and saw Barbara standing in the deep embrasure of the window.

The pale moonlight shone with a weird, ghostly effect on her long, plainly made evening dress of white cashmere, and for a moment Sir Elwyn was startled at the appearance of what seemed really one of the spectres with which the old house was reputed to be haunted. But he was no coward, and drawing nearer he recognised immediately who the fair apparition really was.

"Miss Ray! How you startled me!" he couldn't help exclaiming.

Barbara turned to him with a sad, sweet smile and replied, gently:

"Did I? I am very sorry. The truth is, I came here to think over something that troubled me; about a matter in which I am perplexed how to act. The rest of the household seldom come into this gallery. I suppose you know why?"

"Oh, yes! the traditions attaching to Grey Towers are well enough known in the county, and I must own when I found you standing here I was rather inclined to take you for one of its ghostly visitants, though as a rule I am a hardened sceptic as regards the supernatural. By-the-bye, does Miss Roberta believe in the stories?" Sir Elwyn asked, curiously.

"She is too practical for that," returned Barbara. "When we had been here some days she told us that on account of stupid tales about this part of the house, and the grounds near it, she had caused both to be shut up; but that it was all nonsense and that we were not to listen to anything we might be told about it. She took me over the haunted wing herself, and there was nothing worse to be seen than a few ruinous old rooms and plenty of rat-holes. The ghost story I had heard already, though she little knew it."

"I can see that like myself you are a sceptic, or you would hardly be here," Sir Elwyn replied, laughing.

"Decidedly, as regards the Grey Towers ghosts. But I would not go so far as to say there are no such things as supernatural appearances, for I think it quite possible that the spirits of the loved and lost may, for the good purposes of Providence, be sometimes permitted to revisit this earth."

There was an earnest look in Barbara's large, luminous eyes as she gazed at Sir Elwyn. It was strange how she could speak to him thus of her inward thoughts and fancies, but from the first she had been drawn towards him and had recognised in his a kindred soul.

"I am of your opinion, yet it would be a severe test of one's courage even then. But, pardon me, you had come here to be alone with your thoughts—sad ones too. Will you think me presuming if I say how glad I should be if you would trust me with your trouble, and if I could be of any use to you?" he asked.

It would indeed be a relief to open her heart to anyone so frank and kindly as Sir Elwyn. Barbara felt sure he could be relied upon, and

resolved to confide to him her uneasiness about Hetty.

In a few words she made him acquainted with the circumstances, begging him to keep them secret.

"You need not fear," he said, when he had heard all. "I am glad you told me of this. Had you spoken to your sister her spirit would have been roused, and possibly out of bravado the flirtation with Wynne would have been carried on more vigorously. I know from something he said to me he does not dream she is engaged, and this is what, with your sanction, I propose to do. My cousin, Lord Staniforth, has a living in his gift, about the disposal of which he recently consulted me. I will write and get him to offer it to Wynne, who is a capital fellow and really deserves any piece of good fortune that may befall him. Of course Staniforth will want to see him, and Wynne cannot refuse to go on such a plea; this will take him from here, for a time at least, and may break off the affair altogether, as it is easy to see your sister's affections are not involved. Anyhow it will bring matters to a crisis, for if he is truly in love, on getting this living he will propose formally, be refused, and, we will hope, take his rejection like a man and be too proud to have any more to say to pretty Miss Hetty. How do you think the plan will answer?"

"It is an excellent one. Oh, Sir Elwyn! how can I ever thank you sufficiently?"

Barbara's tone was warmly grateful as she answered.

"Thank me! If you only knew the pleasure it gives me to be able to help you, you would not talk of thanking me."

The baronet's voice was full of suppressed emotion, and taking Barbara's hand he held it in a passionate clasp. It was a dangerous moment for both. Had Sir Elwyn forgotten he was not free? or was he, after bitterly condemning Madge's behaviour, guilty after the same manner?

The girl drew her hand quickly away. She loved him too well to be angry with him, but if he was weak she must be strong and show him the path of duty. Though her heart thrilled within her at his touch, by no word or deed of hers should he be tempted from the right—he should never guess that she cared for him other-wise than a friend.

"We had better go down now, Sir Elwyn," she said, attempting to leave the window.

But with outstretched arm the baronet detained her.

"Barbara, in Heaven's name tell me one thing: If I had been free could you ever have cared for me?"

His voice was hoarse and broken with passion and his face set and pale as he bent down and whispered these words.

She raised her eyes, wet with unshed tears, and looked at him, infinite pity and tenderness emulating her answer.

"Hush! Pray do not speak to me like this. Yours is not a fair question, and were I to— to reply as you wish it would do no good and make us both miserable."

Once more she tried to pass by him, but in vain. A wild, tumultuous joy filled Sir Elwyn's breast at the blissful knowledge that his feelings were returned by the girl he loved so madly.

"Barbara, you shall not leave me like this!" he cried, eagerly. "Say but one word, darling, and I will free myself from a bondage that has become hateful. Do not think any wrong will be done, for this very night I had almost made up my mind to act before it should be too late. You must have seen the provocation I have received, and how unworthy Madge's conduct has been. A heartless coquette shall never be my wife. Oh! Barbara, speak! tell me I am not condemned to life-long misery. May I not hope?"

For one moment only did she waver, seeing through the dim vista of the future the happiness that would be hers as his wife, contrasted with the long, dreary years spent alone. Then, cutting keenly as a sword, came the remembrance of all Miss Roberta and others had said: the picture of Beechlands sold, Lady Ormerod's

bitter grief, Sir Elwyn's blighted career and life of privation as one of those most wretched beings, a penniless aristocrat.

So much had been expected from his marriage with Margaret Bell; the glory of the fine old home and ancient title would be revived, and with increased wealth what possibilities might not lie before the baronet? Political distinction, Parliamentary honours, had been freely spoken of. What had Barbara to offer him? Nothing, for Aunt Roberta, though kind, was peculiarly reserved about the disposition of her property, and it was by no means certain that she would do more than provide for her orphan nieces.

If Sir Elwyn gave up Margaret for her would he never regret the sacrifice? never look back with longing eyes on what *might* have been? This was not all. Barbara's nature was one that scorned the idea of winning another girl's lover away from her by stealth, however undeserving of him she might be.

She soon recovered herself.

"Sir Elwyn, you forget," she said, proudly and coldly, concealing the tumult of feeling that warred within her. "Your word is pledged, and as a man of honour you cannot withdraw from it. Such questions are an insult, especially with your marriage to Miss Bell so near."

"Barbara, forgive me!" he pleaded, earnestly. "Do not look at me so reproachfully, for I swear I had intended to break off this wretched affair—"

He stopped abruptly, surprised and startled. Barbara, with a face pallid as marble and her whole frame shaken with agitation, had grasped his arm, pointing out of the window at some object in the snow-covered garden.

"Look! look!" was all she said, in accents of terror.

The baronet's eyes followed hers, and in spite of his avowed scepticism he could not repress a start of horror.

The moonlight lay white and ghostly on the deserted garden, casting weird, black shadows from the gnarled pollards near the Silent Pool, which was hard frozen. These trees grew in a mass on the right side of the water, on the left was a long reach of gravelled pathway, now covered by snow.

It was towards this that the eyes of the watchers at the window were directed.

Two figures stood by the edge of the pond—a man and a woman—both clad in some light attire, on which the rays of the moon shone with spectral effect. They appeared to be arguing some point with fervour, for the woman kept turning away from the man, who stretched out his hands as if in ardent entreaty.

A strange sight and a terrible one to those who knew the wild legend of the pool. Barbara clung to the baronet's arm shivering, and he, rooted to the spot, could not take his eyes off the figures. At last these, after various movements, in which the man seemed to be imploring some boon which his companion was loth to grant, glided silently along the margin of the pool and disappeared behind the pollards.

Sir Elwyn drew a long breath as of relief, and Barbara relaxed her grasp of his arm. They looked at each other with questioning eyes, trying to read each other's thoughts. Barbara was the first to speak.

"What do you think of it—what can it mean?" she asked, eagerly, her voice shaken with an awe she couldn't control.

Sir Elwyn had recovered his composure, and there was a peculiar smile upon his lips as he replied:

"You will call me a hardened unbeliever, I fear, but in spite of what we have witnessed I am still a sceptic. Reassure yourself, my dear Miss Ray; ghosts, if such eerie beings do visit our sphere, cannot cast dark shadows upon the snow and leave visible footprints behind them. The two we saw were no wraiths, though who could have chosen such a time and place for a rendezvous I am at a loss to conjecture. Possibly it is some servant and her sweetheart, who fear the stern vigilance of the housekeeper, and know that by the much-dreaded Silent Pool there will be no danger of watchers or interruption. Evidently it is not the first time they have chosen this

spot for their stolen meetings; and depend upon it, the renewed scare which has arisen of late about the Grey Towers ghosts may be easily traced to this."

Barbara felt her nervous fears dispelled by the calmness of Sir Elwyn's manner, and suggested they should tell Miss Ray what they had seen, in order that the mystery might be cleared up, if possible. But Sir Elwyn interrupted her hastily.

"No, do not mention it to anyone. I have my reasons for asking you this. Leave it to me and let me try to find the clue to what we have seen in my own way."

His manner was strangely perturbed, and his face was pale and haggard, as he looked reflectively out upon the snow-mantled scene.

"We will go down now," he said, "it is cold here, and you are shivering. But tell me ere we part that you have forgiven my rash speech and that we are friends still, Barbara—I must call you so for the last time."

"FRIENDS always, I trust, and the more truly so, Sir Elwyn, because your nature is too brave and true a one to break a word once pledged and to forget the call of duty."

Barbara held out her hand, the baronet took it for a moment in his own and kissed it gently, tenderly, as a dear friend or brother might have done.

Then, descending the broad oak staircase, they sought the room where the others were assembled.

CHAPTER V.

TWO CHRISTMAS EVES.

CHRISTMAS EVE, the night of the ball, had arrived, and Grey Towers presented a scene of unusual festivity. The large drawing-room had been cleared and prettily decorated with burnished holly, mistletoe, and hot-house flowers, and the floor well prepared for dancing. The Caxton band was in attendance, and strains of music floated softly on the air, now the Lancers, now a dreamy German waltz; while the gay dancers whirled rapidly by, their many-hued dresses like flowers in a parterre, and the sounds of bright laughter and mirth rose and mingled with the melody.

The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men; A thousand hearts beat happily; and when Music arose with its voluptuous swell, Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spoke again, And all went merrily as a marriage bell.

At least, to all outward appearance; but if that night the secret feelings of some in the ball-room could have been disclosed what strange revelations would have been made, how the tangled web of Fate would have been straightened!

Sir Elwyn Ormerod stood in the doorway among a small knot of non-dancers, watching the couples as they skinned swiftly over the well-waxed floor.

The musicians had struck up the "Dreamland Waltz," and Madge Bell whirled past encircled by the arm of Raymond Joyce, who appeared (as most men of fair complexion do) to unusual advantage in evening dress.

Very queenly and beautiful Madge looked in a trailing robe of diaphanous rose du thé tulle, with a superb diamond parure in her hair and similar gems sparkling on her neck and shell-like ears.

As the two passed the baronet Dr. Joyce stooped and said something to his partner, then glanced back with a strange, mocking smile as Madge laughed loudly.

Sir Elwyn bit his lip fiercely. He had asked Madge for a dance earlier in the evening, but her card was full, she told him confusedly, she really had not one to spare.

Conscience, they say, makes cowards of us all. Knowing how ill she had behaved she feared that Sir Elwyn would take her severely to task the first opportunity he found, and such opportunity she was resolved not to give him, for reasons best known to herself.

That the baronet intended to offer her her freedom she did not dream; she had far too

good an opinion of herself for that. Were she to break off their engagement her parents would be furious, for they loved the baronet like a son; and she was too proud of her future position to wish to regain her liberty and to escape from a thralldom which since she had known Raymond Joyce had become daily more hateful. She little recked of that "Providence which shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may."

The next couple were Hetty—looking very pretty and girlish in a dress of white net, looped with large marguerites—and Arthur Marchmont!

The past week had been an eventful and joyful one for her. The very day that poor Cyril Wynne had received his summons from Lord Staniforth, Arthur had arrived at Grey Towers bearing glad news of the success of his picture and a kind letter for Hetty from his mother, whom he had now completely won over as regards his engagement.

The young artist's manly and straightforward conduct had impressed Aunt Roberta most favourably; and he was not long in gaining her sanction also, though, with the prudence of old age, she added a proviso that until Arthur's fame was more solidly established she did not wish the lovers to marry.

Thus Barbara's misgivings were pleasantly set at rest, and her generous heart was full of unselfish joy in her sister's happiness. Hetty had confessed with tears the little episode of Cyril Wynne, disarming Arthur's wrath however by telling him that at heart she had always been faithful.

This was true, for though a girlish love of admiration might lead her astray for a short time Hetty's was a very different nature to Madge Bell's. The cloud had been but a fleeting one, and unalloyed happiness shone in the faces of the lovers as they swept by.

Miss Roberta had invited Arthur to remain till the following week, extending her invitation to Mrs. Marchmont, who, much to the girls' delight, had arrived on the previous evening to spend Christmas at Grey Towers.

Sir Elwyn looked for Barbara, but she was not among the dancers. At length he saw her, looking very lovely in a dress the fac-simile of Hetty's, talking to Helen Marchmont. He longed to ask her for a dance, but with a frank friendliness that showed the past was ignored she had already accorded him one. More he dared not ask, knowing she would refuse.

As he stood and looked on he was utterly miserable. In spite of his wild vows in the picture-gallery Barbara's sentence rang in his ears.

"Your word is pledged, and you cannot withdraw from it!"

That Madge was a flirt he had known from the beginning. He had become engaged to her with his eyes open to her failings, and could hardly break with her now on that account. Even if he did so he knew Barbara would not marry him, her sense of honour and rectitude was far too keen.

Once, looking across the room, his eyes met hers. Though chatting gaily there was an expression in them that added to his wretchedness.

"She cares for me, and I could stake my existence for one hour of such love as hers. Why should destiny be so cruel?" he thought.

A voice at his elbow disturbed him. It was that of Mrs. Bell, a stout, good-natured matron, magnificently arrayed in green moiré and lustrous emeralds.

"Elwyn, do try if you can find Madge; Naughty child! I am afraid she is promenading in the passages or conservatories, and without her cloak this cold night! Please take it to her and say she must come in."

Sir Elwyn glanced round the ball-room. Madge and Dr. Joyce were nowhere to be seen. He took the cloak and went in search of them, determining to administer a sharp rebuke to the former, let the consequences be what they might.

On the snow-covered path by the Silent Pool two figures paced up and down in earnest conversation. Seen by the moonlight their aspect was pale and spectral; for one, a man, was clad in a long, light ulster that completely covered his evening dress; whilst the other, a girl, wore a clinging, white Shetland shawl that was wrapped hood-fashion over her head and drawn closely round her figure.

The man was speaking, evidently in reply to some observation of his companion.

"You are right—this is a capital idea, so long as the alarm can be kept up; but, Madge, we must be careful, for I believe your tyrant's suspicions are aroused, and that he watches this place. More than once lately I have seen him coming from the picture gallery, which looks out over here, you know."

Madge Bell—for it was she—sighed heavily.

"Ah, well! it is almost the last time we shall meet here, I suppose. The New Year is drawing horribly near, when I shall be in the power of my tyrant, as you call him, for good and all. Shall you ever think of these stolen hours, Raymond?"

Her companion drew her towards him and clasped her in a passionate embrace, from which she did not attempt to free herself.

"Look here, Madge; do not talk like that to me, unless you want to drive me to desperation. I brought you here to-night to get your answer to something I am going to propose. It is this: You love me, at least so you say, and you do not care a rush for Sir Elwyn. My darling, will you not then free yourself from such a hateful bondage, and make me entirely, blissfully happy? It is not too late, Madge. Say but one word, and as soon as I can arrange it we will leave this place and be married privately in London."

His tone was low and earnest as he spoke. Madge hid her face on his shoulder and sobbed, with what was, for her, a near approach of real feeling.

"Oh! Raymond—don't, don't! You know I do love you dearly, but I dare not, cannot. If I were to run away with you it would break papa's and mamma's hearts. They are so fond of Elwyn, and—and we have been engaged so long."

With an angry gesture the doctor unloosed her clinging arms as he replied, with bitterness:

"Love me! Perhaps you do, but you love the rank and title Sir Elwyn can give you more. Since you will not consent then good bye."

He made a feint of leaving Madge when a wild scream from her lips arrested his steps. Turning he saw a third figure, which had emerged from the shadow of the trees and which stood, dark, stern and motionless, before them. It was Sir Elwyn Ormerod.

For a moment no one spoke. Madge and the doctor were too ashamed and confused and the baronet speechless with joy too great for words.

At last, then, it had come—the release for which he had vainly, hopelessly yearned, and yet he might appear with name and honour unstained before the girl he loved.

At length Sir Elwyn broke the silence, holding out his hand to Madge with a frank cordiality that took a weight off her heart.

"Cousin, I thank most heartily the fate which guided me here to-night. Two lives, which might have been wrecked, are saved from hopeless misery. For some time, Madge, I have known our engagement was a mistake. I now gladly give you your freedom. Nay, do not weep! I will take care no blame attaches to you for this. Trust me to explain all and to screen you by every means in my power. Come to the house with me now. If you will wait here, Doctor Joyce, I will return and speak to you."

The baronet's voice became colder and sterner as he addressed the doctor, who had not uttered a word during this scene.

Having taken his cousin back to the house, Sir Elwyn returned to Doctor Joyce. He could not feel very unkind towards the man who had been the cause of his happiness, but Raymond seriously merited some rebuke.

In a few forcible words the baronet expressed

his condemnation of such a course of action as the doctor's had been, pointing out how much better it would have been to have acted in a truthful, manly way—instead of thus compromising the girl he loved and tempting her to deceive her parents.

Raymond lacked candour, but he was not wholly bad, and really cared for Madge; though whether her "golden dower" did not enhance her attractions in his eyes would have been hard to say. He was touched by Sir Elwyn's generosity, after the underhand behaviour of which he had been guilty.

"Upon my word, I don't deserve it," he muttered, when the baronet told him he would try to intercede for him with Mr. and Mrs. Bell, when their natural indignation at this unexpected turn of affairs should have blown over. "I feel an awful sneak—but, Ormerod, you are a first-rate fellow. Indeed, I will try to be worthy of your kindness."

And he kept his word.

That night, thinking over the event which had occasioned such an utter revolution in his life, Sir Elwyn said to himself:

"I was not mistaken the night I saw the 'Grey Towers ghosts.' I had a shrewd idea who they were, and my suspicions have been confirmed. Well, the apparitions are laid for ever now, that is very certain."

Three years have come and gone, bringing many changes, joys, and sorrows with them.

Kind Aunt Roberta has passed to her eternal rest, greatly to the grief of the nieces, who had grown to love her dearly, and whose affection she fully reciprocated.

At her death they found themselves joint owners of Grey Towers and all their aunt's wealth, Miss Ray having expressed in a sealed packet left behind her regret at not having become reconciled to her brother Archibald before his death, and her intention to thus atone for the past.

Hetty is now Mrs. Arthur Marchmont, and lives at Grey Towers with her husband and Barbara.

Madge Bell and Raymond Joyce, too, are married—Mr. and Mrs. Bell, though sadly upset at the time, having wisely resigned themselves to the inevitable—and the broken engagement, like all other nine days' wonders, having soon faded into oblivion.

Little is heard of Sir Elwyn Ormerod, who, since that time, has been travelling abroad with his mother, but workmen are busy at Beechlands, and the gossips look wise.

Once more it is Christmas Eve; and Barbara Ray, standing at the window of the picture gallery, hears the joy bells ring out through the clear, frosty air. She feels no terror at being there, for the spectres of the Silent Pool, as well as the dark, shadowy cares which once filled her heart, are laid for evermore, and the haunted wing echoes with a tiny patterning footstep and a child's merry laugh.

A deep, restful peace is upon her—the quiet of a happiness too great for expression. Suddenly a hand is laid on her shoulder and a deep voice thrilling with unutterable tenderness breathes these words:

"Barbara, my own at last!"

And as she and Sir Elwyn stand once more there together they feel the sweet message of the joy bells steal softly into their hearts—for they have indeed found peace.

[THE END.]

WHILE some men were fishing recently off Kobbister Head, Shetland, one of them hauled in his line, and found on his hook, instead of a cod, a man's waistcoat, of which all the back part was washed away. In a pocket were a watch and chain, with the remainder of a key and gold locket.

THE NEWS FROM YORKTOWN.

(Continued from Page 172.)

CHAPTER XII.

He found, also, another missive, the letter of apology from Grace's father and the invitations contained in it to come to Agincourt House.

As we have seen he wrote a reply, promising to come on the morrow.

"I cannot tell them why it is impossible to start to-day," he said, "but I will provide for the contingency of my falling in this assault by addressing a letter to Grace herself, to be delivered in case of my death. God bless her! She has been true to me, I believe, through all. I can see from her father's epistle that she was always averse to a marriage with her cousin; it is between the lines, though he does not say so in so many words. Alas! what she must have suffered, and how unjust I have been to her! But, Heaven helping me, she shall never suffer again for anything in this life."

We will not invade the sanctity of that letter. It told her through all he had still loved. It described his despair when he heard that she was to be married to her cousin.

"I sought forgetfulness, nay, even death," he wrote, "over and over again in battle, but to no avail, and oh! how thankful I am now that I failed; God was wiser and kinder than I knew." Then he went on to tell of the projected assault. "This is the true reason," he said, "why I do not start at once. If I survive this letter will not be sent; but if I fall my friend, the Vicomte Pierrefonds, has promised to take it to you at once, in order that you may understand why I fail to come. I have also made him promise to deliver to you my favourite charger, Hector. For my sake, if ever you cared for me even a little, take him in and give him a home. He will be alone in his old age, except for you. Ah! if this had only happened earlier, or if duty did not intervene now. But I know that if you ever thought of me at all you will still think better of me for not being recreant, even under this temptation. If I die for my country give me a tear; that is all I ask."

Eight o'clock at night had arrived and rockets shooting and hissing into the sky announced that the hour for the assault had come. The two parties detailed for this deadly struggle were stimulated by a national emulation—the Americans to win glory, the French to retain traditional renown.

In appearance the troops were quite dissimilar, for the worn and weather-stained uniforms of the Continentals were in sad contrast with the splendid costumes of the picked French contingents. Yet in the sun-browned faces of the one was a resolution and in their eyes a fire which prophesied deeds not less brilliant than those for which the famous Auvergne regiment that formed part of the other column had been celebrated for generations.

Washington himself was so excited that he rode close up to the works that were to be assaulted; so close, indeed, that his attendant generals remonstrated. But he quietly disregarded their exhortations, and dismounting, remained standing, watching the struggle until it was over.

The Americans were the first in. At the signal for the assault they rushed forward, and without waiting for pioneers to demolish the abattis tore it down themselves, with true backwoods impetuosity, and then dashed at the earthworks.

Colonel Hamilton, who led the storming party, was the first to mount the parapet. Our hero was close on Hamilton's heels. A score of others pressed behind. The fire which met them was terrible, and was the more fatal because at such close quarters.

Without returning a shot, but with wild hurrahs and levelled bayonets the Continentals poured in, the batteries were swept, the red-cross flag of England was hauled down, and in

its place the stars and stripes shot up into the chill October air, and unfolded to the breeze of night.

The French, meantime, with that rigid notion of military science which characterised their army at that period, had paused while their pioneers went forward to clear away the abattis. To have done otherwise, indeed, would have shocked the Baron de Viomenel; for it would have been against all the traditions of the "grand army."

The British had expected the Americans to do the same, and had been to a certain extent surprised and taken at a disadvantage when it was not done. But they took their revenge now. A tremendous fire decimated the ranks of the French.

But the brave veterans stood motionless as statues, waiting till the abattis should be torn down, losing then, and in the rush that followed, over one-third of their number.

La Fayette, who had already carried his redoubt, had sent an aid to Baron de Viomenel to announce the fact, and the aid came up at this instant, galloping through the twilight across the terrible line of fire. The baron, cool as in a Paris salon, said, when the message was delivered:

"Tell the marquis we are not yet in, but shall be in five minutes."

Almost at the same moment the last axe crashed into the abattis, and the way was open.

"Allons, mes enfans!" cried the baron. "Forward!"

And the white-coated grenadiers, at the words, dashed on.

The fight after this was as short as it was sharp. The first to mount the breach fell, shot through both legs, but he was followed by others, and though the foremost of these also were wounded, a score, a hundred pressed after. The defenders went down in this wild rush like wheat before a whirlwind. As in the other battery, so in this; not a shot was fired on the part of the assailants. It is not often that the cold steel alone does the work, but it did here, and old soldiers who had shared in that fight boasted of it to their dying day.

The baron was as good as his word. Within five minutes after he had received the message of La Fayette the British flag came down, and the allies were in possession of both the batteries.

Washington had remained after refusing to leave his post, silently watching, now La Fayette, and now Baron de Viomenel, until La Fayette's success—when, still silent, he turned his attention exclusively to the other assault. Not till the French were also in did he break the silence. Then he drew a long breath and said, simply:

"It was done, and well done," and turning to his servant, added, "William, my horse," and so mounted and rode off accompanied by his staff.

Not even that terrible struggle, not even the certain victory which its success forecasted, could move that calm and majestic soul to any outward display of emotion.

The capture of the batteries decided the fate of Cornwallis. The British earl, aware that his position was now untenable, made an abortive attempt to escape across the York river in the night, but finding himself thwarted was forced to capitulate two days later. Few ever knew how gallant this was to his proud spirit. He endeavoured at first to surrender to the French alone. But this of course could not be allowed.

When the day actually came in which he and his officers were to deliver up their arms, however, he deputed Major O'Hara to take his place under the plea of illness, and so escaped the personal mortification of the surrender.

The significance of the victory was understood in England as quickly as in America.

When the news reached London and was carried to Lord North, the prime minister, he threw up his hands, staggered back, and cried:

"My God, it is all over!"

The intelligence reached Philadelphia, where the Continental Congress was then sitting, at

the dead of the night; but the watchmen were told of it, and as they went their rounds they cried the hour:

"Two o'clock," and then added, exultingly, "and Cornwallis is taken."

The people, roused from their beds, crowded the streets, congratulating each other; bonfires were kindled; the bells rang in triumph and the excitement was kept up till daybreak.

Meantime, on the night of the assault La Fayette's aid had just returned with the message of the Baron de Viomenel, when an officer who had been sent to inquire into the casualties approached and made the salute.

"I am glad to say we have suffered but little," he said, "but one gallant fellow has fallen—Captain Aylesbury."

"Mon Dieu!" cried the marquis, "not Aylesbury—not my friend? Pauvre enfant! Oh!" clasping his hands, "this takes away all the triumph of the day."

It was, alas! too true. They found our hero lying shot through the body at the foot of the rampart, inside.

"Dead!" the surgeon said, as he stooped over the fallen officer. "No one ever knew a man to survive who had a gunshot wound like that. You see he doesn't breathe."

A rude litter was improvised, and the insensible form borne back from the field. Aylesbury's own body-servant met it on the way, for ill news travels fast, and he had already heard of the tragedy. He would have flung himself on the bier if he had not been forcibly held back.

But when Aylesbury was laid on a bed and half an hour had passed, suddenly he opened his eyes after breathing a deep sigh, and now the poor African servant could no longer be restrained.

"Bress de Lord!" he said, falling on his knees, "bress de Lord, Mars' Philip, you're not gwine to die. You won't die—you shan't die—ole Cato himself will die for you fast."

"Well, I hope I won't die either, Cato," said his master, smiling faintly. "I've too much to live for just now. I suppose—I'm—wounded—"

But here, exhausted even by this slight effort, he fainted away and lost consciousness again.

An hour after, when the ball had been extracted and the wound dressed and the patient had sunk into sleep, the surgeon, who was a different one from the first, older and more experienced, came forth from the tent and said to Cato, whom he found lying across the entrance:

"By-the-bye where's the Vicomte de Pierrefonds? You ought to know, you old rascal. He told me an hour ago when your master was first brought in that he might as well start at once for Agincourt House, for he had a solemn charge to deliver there and he wished to be the first with the sad news, as he thought he could break it better than any other. He oughtn't to have gone until he was certain. Why didn't you stop him? I wonder if you're good for anything except to blubber and make a fuss. There, stop! I don't think after all your master will die."

CHAPTER XIII.

Now did Aylesbury die. Towards morning he awoke from a refreshing sleep in such a sound state of health that even the opinionated surgeon who had first examined him admitted he would recover.

A messenger was in consequence despatched immediately to Agincourt House, who reached there only a few minutes behind the vicomte, so that when Grace opened her eyes after her fainting spell it was to hear the welcome news that her lover was out of danger.

The good vicomte could never forgive himself for his mistake. He had reached the vicinity of Agincourt House late in the night, and had put up, with his orderly, at a small, one-story wayside inn until morning. He had tried to arrange his arrival at the Hall itself so that he should anticipate any other, and yet not intrude at an hour earlier than the habits

of well-bred people would justify. In his laudable effort to fulfil his sad duty promptly, and yet with due propriety, he had, as we have seen, signally failed, though it was really from no fault of his own.

Grace found it easy to forgive him, however, now.

"Say no more, my dear vicomte," were her words. "You have proved yourself the best of friends. We were only—a little—frightened."

"Ah! it is ze right I shall never forgive myself for," he replied, with much gesticulating of hands and shrugging of the shoulders, addressing Mr. Agincourt, Mrs. Agincourt, and Grace, in turn. "I did try to do it all for ze best. I did even make my man stop at ze end of ze avenue and give to me, myself, ze bridle of ze cheval, war-horse you call him, so zat no common soldier should deliver him to you. But ze fates were not in favour. It is my luck. I always have ze bad luck. I did want to be detailed for ze assault yesterday, but it was not my luck, I had to stay and look on, poor devil zat I am."

Even though as yet hardly recovered from her great shock, Grace could not help smiling at the volatile but evidently good-hearted vicomte.

"Mamma," she said, as soon as she could speak to her mother alone, "let us go to Yorktown and nurse Captain Aylesbury. I am sure you and I can do it better than the rough camp attendants. Do, mamma, dear."

Her appealing eyes, her clasped hands, her agitated tones, spoke even more eloquently than her words.

Her mother was on the point of yielding and starting for the camp when such favourable reports arrived, however, that she proposed instead to have the patient conveyed to the Hall.

"He can be brought up on the river to our own landing, and carried up from there," she said, "almost without any fatigue whatever, and we can do for him here much better than there. Your father shall go to Yorktown at once and arrange it."

So a little before high noon Grace's father set forth with Doctor Graeme in company, and several servants on horseback.

"I must go, if for no other purpose," said the doctor, with sly humour, "at least to guarantee none of us spies."

They reached the camp before nightfall. Two days subsequently they returned with Aylesbury, the surgeons having by that time decided that the wounded man could make the journey without risk.

Attended by her mother, who was the most skilful of nurses, with Grace for her assistant, our hero recovered rapidly. The old family doctor took no particular credit to himself, however, but whispered to Grace one day:

"My dear, there are medicines not in our pharmacopoeia that work wonders, and I have a suspicion that one of this kind has been found efficacious here. Eh?—what do you think?"

And Grace's only answer was a blush.

What happy days those were! A tender, stolen look; a single word sometimes, but full of feeling; a lingering of the hands for a moment when they met accidentally.

These were little things, but they made the pulses of the lovers beat and transfigured life into Paradise itself; and later, when Aylesbury recovered sufficiently to walk out and the winter days were mild enough to permit it, what delicious hours were spent under the old trees or in the bosky woods near at hand.

A favourite resort of the lovers was a rustic seat, and here Aylesbury would read aloud while Grace sewed quietly, or after the book or chapter was exhausted they would fall into such converse as only the young and happy know.

We will not intrude further on these tête-à-têtes however. There are some things too sacred for words. Among these are the questions and confessions of just such a pair of lovers; their mutual acknowledgments of when they first began to think of each other, how they hoped and how they feared.

We will lift the curtain for one glimpse only before we go on.

"Ah!" whispered Grace, in answer to a question, one day, looking up shyly from her sewing. "I think I loved you from the first."

"And I," he replied, as he let his arm slide from the back of the rustic seat till it encircled her waist, and so drew her to him. "I don't think—I know—that I loved you from the moment we met. Shall I ever forget it?"

Spring had set in before Aylesbury was able to resume the saddle. Meantime he had been brevetted a colonel, "for gallant conduct at Yorktown," but as the war was virtually over and active service out of the question he sent in his resignation, and soon after began to prepare his ancestral mansion for the reception of his bride.

For it had been determined, after much solicitation on his part and a little natural maidenly hesitation on Grace's that the marriage should take place in the spring.

During the time that the army remained in that vicinity the French officers were frequent visitors at Agincourt House; but though they went at first to cheer up their old comrade they would have come there often for a different purpose if they had not seen that the case was hopeless.

"I do think," said one of them, the highest in rank of all, a descendant of the famous Montmorencies, who were old at the time of the Crusades, "zat ze American young lady is ze divinest in ze world; zey are so virginal, so natural, so—what you call him?—heavenly; zey complexions are like ze cream and zestrawberry, and they walk like young goddesses, like Diana her very self, and of all ze divine creatures zat I see in America ze Mees Agincourt is ze most divine—Grace, you call her. Ah! zat is just ze word for her movement, her courtesy, all like ze zephyr zat blow in ze rose-garden—mon Dieu!"

CHAPTER XIV.

How shall we describe the wedding? Have you ever seen one in Virginia, even in these degenerate days? Yet a wedding now there is to a wedding then what the moon is to the sun, a star to a constellation.

There was not only a wealth but a splendour and stateliness in those old times which have long since disappeared. A good deal of grandeur, we must confess, went out with hair-powder and coaches-and-four.

The ceremony was attended by the numerous relations of both parties, for the end of the war was now sufficiently assured to allow of a return of social intercourse, even between those of opposite opinions, each side striving to ignore the past with its recriminations, its animosities, its hatreds.

Never, it was said, had there been such a series of festivities as followed the marriage.

Grace would have avoided them, but the hearty hospitalities of her many cousins were not to be declined without offence, and so, after a due interval, the bride and bridegroom started, as was then the custom, on a series of visits to neighbouring country-houses.

At each one of these they remained for from two to five days, while dancing and feasting went on uninterruptedly, for every house was packed to its utmost capacity with guests, most of them young, and the girls invariably pretty.

How the huge glass chandeliers rattled as the gay couples went down racing the Virginia reel! And how when Grace and her husband left off the minuet everybody admired and applauded! What feastings, too, followed and preceded!

To this day there are coloured cooks in many a Virginia kitchen fit to send up dishes to the gods, but at that period there were even more, and, if possible, even greater artists.

Ah! those good old times. Shall we ever see their like again? We know more, we think ourselves better educated, we travel by steam

instead of by coach; but there was a heartiness, a sincerity, a rich enjoyment of life then that, alas! we rarely see now. The men and women of that age were nearer to Arcadia. That is the one patent fact after all.

In going thus from plantation to plantation Grace and her husband journeyed in due state. Four full-blooded horses were harnessed to a coach, in which she and one or more young companions travelled, while Aylesbury himself, with other cavaliers and a troop of servants, attended on horseback.

Sometimes a river would have to be crossed in order to reach the hospitable mansion, whose old-fashioned gables were seen peeping above the trees on the other side, the chimneys already beginning to smoke with an anticipatory welcome.

Here Aylesbury would dismount and assist his bride to descend, and it was a sight to witness to see the dainty way in which she put forth her little foot to reach the step, the grace with which she extended her hand, and the ravishing smile which she bestowed on her husband.

One of the party meantime would be ringing the bell, hung on a rude pole or in the crotch of a tree, to summon the ferrymen across; or if this failed, or if there was no bell, or if the bell was too cracked to be of service, then the hands would be put to the mouth and the voice uplifted in a loud, long hillo that echoed and re-echoed from river-bank to river-bank. That was a bit of Arcadia, was it not?

At last the round of festivities was over and bride and bridegroom were allowed to settle down in peace at the old Aylesbury mansion. On the first evening that they were alone the husband, sitting with his wife on the wide porch, said:

"How glad I am it is all over! I can now have you to myself a little. I am too selfish, I confess, to share you with strangers."

"And I—and I," whispered Grace, creeping closer to his side and laying her head on his shoulder and tenderly looking up into his eyes, "am glad too—so glad that I cannot find words to express it."

Mr. Agincourt survived to a good old age, dying at the beginning of this century. He was the last of his name, however, who lived in America, for his son having been sent to England to be educated fell in love there, married, and decided to remain permanently in the old land.

This happened about the time of his father's death, so that there was less reason for his return to Virginia. He came into possession soon after by the decease of a remote relation of a handsome estate in the county where the family had first settled after the Norman Conquest, and there he remained until his death, which occurred within the memory of men not yet very old themselves.

He lies buried in a stately old church which his ancestors built for some monks in the thirteenth century, and though the monks are gone the benefaction remains.

Many descendants of Grace and her husband still survive. Some bear other names by this time than that of Aylesbury; the descendants, of course, of daughters and granddaughters.

Several have been officers in the navy, others officers in the army; several have been governors of Virginia, and others senators of the United States. But through all the men have been brave and true and the women beautiful and womanly.

Grace's second son purchased Agincourt House after the death of her father and lived there till his death. He was succeeded by his son, and he again in turn by his.

The stately mansion still stands, surrounded by its ancestral oaks and looks as imposing as ever. It is one of the few relics of the past that remain unaltered; the same to-day as on that bright October morning when they brought to it THE NEWS FROM YORKTOWN.

[THE END.]



[MARION ALWAYS EVINced THE GREATEST PLEASURE IN THE YOUNG MAN'S SOCIETY.]

AN
ADVENTURE WITH A SPINSTER.
A SHORT STORY.
(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

"WELL, by Jove! if this doesn't throw a damper on my expectations I wouldn't say so! A gentleman of my standing to be used as a travelling companion to spinster! For, to be sure, what is it but a travelling companion? Showing a female around through the country, and that female Miss Hepzibah Dalton! Hepzibah, Hepzibah!" repeated the young man, speculatively. "Why can't parents know when they are giving their daughters such confounded names that they are deliberately condemning them to single blessedness? For what man would have a name like that disgrace his marriage certificate? I'm sure I wouldn't, for one!" and Harry Conway, M.D., sat back in his chair and strove to imagine himself resigned to the unfortunate circumstance.

Dr. Conway (it seemed unnatural to call Henry Conway "doctor," but he had a right to the dignity, he had taken his degree) had for two long months been watching the progress of the days, longing for the close of the term, when the monotony of his college life should be relieved

by a visit to Heatherdale, the home of his most intimate friend and companion, Fred Haskell.

A photograph which the latter gentleman carried in his pocket, and which Harry had accidentally seen one day, was the subject of many a secret thought in the young student's mind, and his seemingly indifferent request to look on the portrait once more, a fortnight or so after having first seen it, suggested to Mr. Haskell a new train of thought. He advanced no remark, however, but, smiling good-humouredly, produced the photo, observing significantly that "Mab was a little beauty, though she had no favoured admirer."

Harry's face was rigidly non-committal, but his friend's statement sent the blood in a tumultuous current through his veins. He took the picture, and for a few minutes gazed intently at it. It was a beautiful face. The complexion could not be determined, but the eyes were evidently dark. The nose was pretty; the mouth small and delicately cut, and the expression of the whole was infinitely sweet.

"Any fellow might be proud to exhibit his sister's picture if it looked like that," observed the young man at last, as he returned the photograph to its owner. "How old is she, Fred, if I'm not too inquisitive?"

"Nineteen this month, I think," replied Mr. Haskell, reflectively. "I'll tell you what, Harry: as our family intend to remain at Heatherdale this summer, suppose you make us a visit

when the term is over? I'm sure my mother will be pleased, and Mab's in her element when company is proposed—particularly gentlemen, with wicked enjoyment."

Harry's face did not betoken approval at this last.

"Is Miss Haskell partial to the sex generally?" he asked.

"Is health, youth and beauty in either sex insensible to the same attributes in the other?" quizzed Fred.

Harry made no reply. He hadn't much beauty of face himself, but with health and strength and a fine physique combined with a good intellect and a well-balanced character, he felt with a little pardonable pride that he was not the least desirable fellow in the world. At all events the invitation was accepted, and the young man was looking forward eagerly to the time when it should be fulfilled.

Commencement Day arrived. How Harry watched for a certain face! But it did not come. Miss Haskell was away from home with her father, and was not expected to return for a fortnight and perhaps longer. Mrs. Haskell was present, however, and on her introduction to Harry she received the young man with cordial pleasure, urging him warmly to accept her son's invitation.

Harry was delighted. A little disappointed, perhaps, at not seeing the fair Marion; but he could wait.

The Conway family was not represented at all in the audience at Commencement that year. Mrs. Conway was ill, and company had unexpectedly arrived from some distance, which in itself would make it a little difficult to leave just at that time.

So Harry prepared to return home, and in company with his friends set out on his journey.

For a considerable distance their way lay along the same road, but within thirty miles or so of the home of each they were obliged to separate; so, taking leave of his friends with the promise that he would join them in a few weeks at Heatherdale, Harry pursued the rest of his way in solitude.

It was not eagerness to get home, or curiosity as to who the company there might be, nor even anxiety because of his mother's illness that occupied the mind of the young man during the time that passed.

The fair, sweet face of Marion Haskell alone filled his imagination. How he longed to behold the original of the portrait which had so fascinated him! But the time was nearly at hand when his desire should be gratified. He would wait with patience.

The long, tedious journey was at last accomplished, and with a sigh of relief and content Harry ascended the long flight of stone steps which led to his mother's home. Of course everybody was delighted to welcome him back. His mother and little sister were quite overcome with the joy of having Harry with them once again.

Mrs. Conway was a delicate lady, with an air of extreme refinement about her which perhaps was heightened by an expression of passive suffering which had become habitual with her. Since the death of her husband, which had occurred some two or three years before, she had been a victim to hypochondria. Her disease was more in the mind than the body, and her son, who knew well her weakness, humoured her with good-natured indulgence.

"Whom have we here for company, ma mère?" inquired the young man a few minutes after the family greetings were over.

Mrs. Conway smiled.

"Aunt Hepzibah Dalton," she replied.

Harry sat back with a prolonged whistle.

"Aunt Hepzibah!" he repeated. "What in the name of common sense brought her here?"

"Hush—sh!"

The hurried whisper from little Annie Conway just preceded the entrance of the subject of their conversation.

Miss Dalton was a lady whose height, age and disposition were equally uncertain. Sometimes she appeared to be of ordinary stature, and again

her sudden elongation was absolutely fabulous. A pair of light blue eyes, shaded by still lighter lashes, peered suspiciously through a pair of gold-bowed spectacles at whomsoever was unfortunate enough to come under the lady's scrutiny, and an immaculate cap surmounted the quaint, grey curls which ornamented either side of her wrinkled forehead.

She glanced inquiringly at the young man as she entered the room, and as she recognised him darted forward, and taking his hand between her hands, imprinted a sounding kiss on the mouthed lips.

The young gentleman hardly relished the caress, but he bore it with an astonishing grace, and immediately set about making himself generally agreeable to their not overwelcome guest.

During their conversation Harry touched on his intended visit to Heatherdale.

Mrs. Conway was a little disappointed. She had hoped that her son would join his sister and herself at their own country residence; but Harry pacified her with the promise that he would pass the last of the season with her as usual.

"Where is this Heatherdale?" questioned Miss Hepzibah, who had, during the talk between mother and son, been occupied with her own thoughts.

"I have never been there myself," replied Harry, "but Heatherdale I know to be very beautifully situated on the outskirts of one of the prettiest suburbs of L——."

"L——!" echoed Miss Hepzibah, with a start. "Why, that is where John Murray's family lives, and just exactly where I have thought of going for two years past; but I could not gratify my desire because I did not think it safe to venture so far alone. I will go now though; and your company, Harry, will be just the thing to protect a lady on such a journey. How fortunate that this should have come about—just as Elizabeth is indisposed too!" (Elizabeth was Harry's mother.) "For of course we couldn't be of much comfort to each other under the circumstances," concluded the old lady, decisively.

Harry was speechless. Miss Hepzibah's money bags loomed up warningly before his fancy. If nothing arose to incur the old lady's displeasure, the bulk of her seemingly limitless treasury would revert to the Conways; but if, by chance, offence should find place in that uncertain heart it was farewell to their prospects.

So, setting herself back in her seat, the old lady drew off her white cotton gloves, and diving down into the depths of her carpet bag, drew forth a huge blue sock and ball of yarn, which she immediately set to work upon with surprising dexterity.

This whole programme was too much for the equanimity of the last arrival. She had evidently out of well-bred regard for Harry's feelings, been struggling with her desire to laugh. At the old lady's last movement she could restrain herself no longer, and a merry peal rang out, full of hearty, girlish enjoyment.

Harry turned a half-angry, half-reproachful glance toward the pretty offender, but all he could catch was a pair of brown eyes overflowing with mischief and a mass of curling brown hair. The young lady's father (she had called him papa, at all events) took no notice of his daughter's amusement—indeed, her merriment did not seem new to him, and Harry inwardly resolved that if ever he had daughters they should be brought up to know better than this impudent minx.

The days passed rapidly away, Miss Hepzibah all the time eagerly discussing her anticipated visit, and Harry desperately hoping that something would turn up in the meantime to take the old lady out of the way. No such fortunate occurrence took place, however, and the morning of their departure at last dawned.

Harry, having taken leave of his mother and sister, stood at the foot of the steps waiting to hand Miss Hepzibah into the carriage, but his patience had not a severe test, for the old lady soon appeared in the doorway with the inevitable hand-box and umbrella and a carpet travelling bag in hand. Her bonnet was not exactly a poke, but even that would have been more tolerable than that long black lace veil, with its spots as large as penny, hanging perpendicularly over the face; a pair of white cotton gloves, with about an inch and a quarter of surplus finger room, added to the quaint effect of the whole.

Taking leave of her relations, Aunt Hepzibah descended the steps with a lumbering tread. Mrs. Conway could with difficulty restrain a smile, and Annie watched the whole demurely. A minute sufficed to get the old lady settled in the carriage, bag and baggage, and with an expression of despair upon his face which was ludicrous to witness Harry stepped in after her, and they were driven on to the station. During this irksome part of their journey Miss Hepzibah's voluble tongue rattled on incessantly, and it was with a sigh of relief that Harry paused at the station and saw himself and his loquacious companion in the train and on the way to L——.

Miss Hepzibah's appreciation or disapproval of whatever she saw was made audibly manifest, but Harry was too preoccupied to notice her. Thoughts of Miss Haskell were constantly coming up in his mind. Was she blonde or brunette, tall or short, stout or slender? The young man pictured her first one thing, then another; each one seeming in itself an ideal image of the lovely Marion.

Steadily the train still sped onward. They had already stopped at several stations, and now the shrill whistle of the engine warned them that they were about to stop again. This time several passengers got out and only two entered, a couple, evidently father and daughter, who entered and seated themselves at the right, in front of our friends.

Harry did not notice their entrance; but Miss Hepzibah, leaning forward, peered inquiringly down into the face of the young girl. The unexpected movement evidently excited the latter's merriment, for she laughed outright.

The old lady waxed indignant, and Harry struggled heroically with his mortification. Turning toward the window he strove by certain extraordinary statements regarding objects they passed to draw the incorrigible spinster's attention to the same.

Miss Hepzibah, glancing up at the young man with an expression half surprised, half indignant, ejaculated, in tones sufficiently loud to be heard distinctly by everyone:

"Well, I think it's about time you showed me some attention, Harry! Up to this moment I might as well have had a dummy for a companion. No, thank you, there's nothing of interest to me out there; I can waste my time to better advantage."

So, setting herself back in her seat, the old lady drew off her white cotton gloves, and diving down into the depths of her carpet bag, drew forth a huge blue sock and ball of yarn, which she immediately set to work upon with surprising dexterity.

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How thankfully he observed that they were approaching their journey's end! A few stations beyond, and they would stop at L——, where he could drop Aunt Hepzibah and take a carriage himself for Heatherdale.

For a time nothing further occurred to excite his mortification or to heighten the amusement of their saucy neighbour. One station only now remained.

Miss Hepzibah seemed to be aware of the fact, for she folded up her knitting and placed it carefully back into the bag again. The sun was beginning to shed his rays across the old lady's face. She arose without speaking, evidently with the intention of changing her seat. She had gone but a few steps, however, when she had slipped, and a quick, sudden movement to regain

herself resulted in her violently turning her foot.

A cry of pain escaped her, and she would have fallen had it not been for the young lady's father, who, observing her situation, arose hastily to her assistance. A quick, frightened exclamation sprang to the lips of the young lady herself.

"Oh, papa!" she cried, "I hope she is not hurt! It was all my fault; she slipped on a piece of the skin of a banana which I let carelessly drop on the floor!" And a look of genuine distress came into the bright young face.

"She is severely hurt," replied the gentleman, drawing his conclusion from poor Miss Hepzibah's face, which was ashy white, with her lips twinned with pain.

Poor Harry's consternation and distress knew no bounds. Here was an opportunity of exercising his skill as a physician, but his wits forsook him utterly. He strove to assist in helping the sufferer, but extreme anxiety only made him appear awkward.

"If she can rest here for the time being it will be well," observed the gentleman, placing his burden in one of the seats as comfortably as was possible; "the train stops in about three minutes, when we can procure medical assistance."

A deep groan, the first she had uttered since the accident, escaped the poor woman's lips.

"Oh, how she must suffer!" exclaimed the young girl, who had been earnestly regarding Miss Hepzibah for some moments. "Do you think, sir," turning to Harry, "that she blames me for it?"

Something in her face, as she lifted it so earnestly to his, struck Harry as being familiar; it seemed that he had met her somewhere but could not recollect where; and smiling reassuringly down into the anxious countenance, he replied, politely:

"The affair was purely accidental; nobody is to blame. I am thankful the train is about to stop, for once where the necessary accommodations are at hand, I can attend to her nicely myself."

"You are a physician, then?" interrogatively.

Harry nodded assent, and at this the train stopped. Harry, with the assistance of the old gentleman who had so kindly aided him, succeeded in removing the sufferer to the ladies' waiting-room at the station.

"Now, papa," began the young lady, as they settled Miss Hepzibah on one of the seats, "our carriage must be waiting here somewhere, and of course it is our duty to place it at this lady's disposal. It is some ten minutes' drive before we reach a druggist's, and if you go at once and have it brought to the nearest point, I think we can get on without further delay. They will doubtless be expecting us at Heatherdale, but we can explain all when we arrive there."

"Heatherdale!"

In a single instant the whole truth flashed upon Harry's mind. The face he could not recall—that bright young face, with its mischievous and rosy mouth—was the same which had smiled at him from the picture; and Marion Haskell and his singular chance acquaintance one and the same person!

"Pardon me," began the young man, with some hesitation, as soon as Mr. Haskell had started off, "but did I not understand you to say that you are going to Heatherdale?"

"Heatherdale is my home, sir," answered the young lady, turning to Harry, a questioning look in her brown eyes.

"It seems a remarkable coincidence," continued our friend, still a little embarrassed, "but I happen to be on my way there also."

The puzzled expression left the young girl's face. She sprang up quickly, exclaiming:

"You—you are—"

"Harry Conway," replied Harry, hastily grasping the proffered hand.

A groan from Miss Hepzibah here took their attention; the poor woman had for fifteen minutes been bravely battling with the severest

pain, and her strength was rapidly sinking under it.

"Do something for me, Harry, or else take me home," she murmured, faintly.

"Here is papa," said Miss Haskell, softly. "Let us get her ready now, and she will soon be eased of her pain."

Once again Miss Hepzibah was supported between the two gentlemen; but this time she was utterly unable to help herself; and with the utmost care and attention she was conducted out and into the carriage.

A few minutes served to bring them to the druggist's, where they carefully alighted with their burden, and at last safe within doors the old lady was placed upon a couch and the injured foot held up to view.

Oh, that foot, as it stood ready to be divested of its enormous gaiter! Its prodigious dimensions haunted Harry for many a day after. Involuntarily he glanced down at Miss Haskell's dainty French kid boots, and began wondering if her foot would grow to the size of Miss Hepzibah's if she chanced to be an old maid.

During the operation Marion explained to her father the singular circumstances which had brought Harry into contact with them, and with cordial good-nature the gentleman welcomed his son's friend.

The worst of the difficulty was now over. Miss Hepzibah's ankle, which was found to be badly sprained, was carefully and skilfully dressed; and with the aid of restoratives she was feeling comparatively well.

"Now that everything is arranged, and we are all due at the same place, we will of course travel on to Heatherdale together," said Mr. Haskell, while a happy smile lighted his daughter's face at the thought of being of service when she had, though unintentionally, occasioned so much distress.

Harry coloured painfully.

"You mistake, sir," he commenced, in an embarrassed tone. "This lady—Miss Dalton—was not going to Heatherdale. She intends to stop with some friends, somewhere in this vicinity, is it not?"—"Aunt Hepzibah," he was going to say, but the words failed him; he could not.

"Oh, but she could not think of such a thing under the circumstances!" cried Miss Haskell, eagerly. "You will go right on with us, will you not?" turning to Miss Hepzibah. "I'm sure you shall be well cared for until your foot is well, when you can join your friends as you intended—that is if you wish to leave us."

Miss Hepzibah, whose first impression of her new-found acquaintance was rapidly giving way to one of a warmer nature, gratefully accepted the proffered invitation; and thus the party once more entered the carriage and were driven on to Heatherdale. On the way Miss Hepzibah had little to say; she lay back in her seat apparently exhausted. Mr. Haskell was kind and sedulously polite to the old lady, bestowing on her the most of his attention.

Harry, taking advantage of his monopoly of Miss Haskell, explained to her everything connected with his journey, including his relationship to Aunt Hepzibah. The young lady listened attentively, every now and then laughing at the thoughts of her recent experience in the train.

"How surprised Fred will be," she observed, smilingly, "at seeing us all together! And mamma will be so pleased."

The moments were speeding rapidly away, and they were fast nearing Heatherdale. The house was at last disclosed to view, and bending eagerly forward, Marion discovered the form of her brother standing on the piazza.

"There is Fred!" she cried, eagerly; then, as the carriage drove up and stopped at the door, without waiting for assistance, she sprang out and ran lightly up the steps to meet her brother.

"Here we are at last, Fred," she cried, kissing him gayly. "Did you think we never were coming? Where is mamma? I must go and call her."

She dashed past the bewildered young man, whose expression of countenance, when he saw

his father and Harry descend from the carriage and assist to the ground an apparently helpless woman, can better be imagined than described.

"Well, by Jove! Harry," ejaculated the startled Fred, "this is a surprise. You are the last man I expected to meet under the circumstances. Glad to see you, though, old fellow!" offering his hand cordially.

Harry shook it warmly, saying, in an undertone:

"I'll explain all later, Fred; we must dispose of the old lady first; she has met with an accident."

At this Mrs. Haskell appeared on the scene. Marion had explained the matter to her, and without evincing in their presence the least surprise she extended to her unexpected guests a cordial greeting.

Aunt Hepzibah was soon comfortably established in an apartment which had been assigned for her use during her stay, and was so assiduously waited upon by the whole household that she heartily declared herself compensated for all the pain she had suffered.

The days passed merrily by. Harry's infatuation for Marion grew with their acquaintance. Every hour he discovered something sweeter in her character than he had observed before, and as Fred Haskell had intended, his fascination was ripening into love.

Marion always evinced the greatest pleasure in the young man's society, and, indeed, her pretty face brightened whenever he approached her.

"She returns his fancy fast enough," thought Fred, as he watched the two. And he was right.

Aunt Hepzibah's love for the young girl was surprising. She was not content unless Marion was in sight, and would smile approvingly when she saw her young favourite in company with her nephew.

"Let it go on," she said to herself, "and when I make my will I know whose names shall be mentioned first in it."

It did go on until Miss Hepzibah's foot was entirely well and both she and Harry concluded that it was time to go home.

"I cannot leave Heatherdale until I shall have ascertained her feelings for me," thought Harry, toward the last; "I must know my fate, whatever it is ordained to be."

Half hopeful, half fearful, the young man sought his love, and alone with her in the pretty arbour, a little distance from the house, he declared to her his passion.

Marion listened, only a nervous fluttering of the fingers and a deepened flush on the bright cheeks telling of her feelings.

Whatever her answer was it was sufficient to make Harry happy, and when they both appeared in the midst of the household again everybody knew or guessed what had happened, and everybody smiled approval.

Thus resulted Harry's first trip to Heatherdale; and although his journey hither was made under unfavourable auspices, he never looked back on even that portion of it as a disagreeable memory.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MR. PLIMSOLL is an original man. He has had published a map of London, showing the fish shops, and how sparsely the metropolis is supplied with the means of a necessary and what should be a cheap food.

The latest American "notion" for exportation to Europe is gloves made of fishes' skin.

M. TELLER intends to cross the Channel from France in a boat 18 feet long, driven by electricity. This will be a startling event and no doubt the avant courier of a mighty revolution in ocean navigation.

MR. FAWCETT has made another concession to the Telephone Exchange Companies. Long ago they found that their instruments permitted them to talk between London and Brighton. With a telephone connected with his office a

merchant might enjoy the sea and transact his daily business—hear his letters read, give his instructions, conclude his bargains, and then go forth into the King's Road. For a long time, however, St. Martin's-le-Grand held out. Meanwhile they made experiments which proved to them that they were not quite ready to take the matter up. They have now given their licence, and in a few weeks it is probable that London-super-Mare will be talking with London and no let or hindrance.

The scheme has at length been authorized for insuring letters containing money and valuables, and the maximum insurable amount has been raised from £25 to £100. An Act of Parliament will have to be passed next session before the new scheme can come into operation.

A PROPOSAL will be made to Parliament for increasing Prince Leopold's income on his marriage. His brothers, the Dukes of Edinburgh and Connaught, have had an addition of £10,000 a year on their marriage.

DR. JOHN RUXTON, of the Army Medical Department, was called in at Peshawar, in 1874, to a boy, aged five, who had severe symptoms of hydrophobia, following one month after a bite received from a rabid bull-dog. Considering the case to be hopeless, and remembering the soothing effects of Indian hemp taken by himself on one occasion for experiment, Dr. Ruxton administered five minims of the tincture of that herb simply to relieve the child's sufferings. To his surprise the child fell asleep for ten hours and on awaking felt very drowsy and slept again for twelve hours. The symptoms of hydrophobia never recurred, though the medicine was repeated as a measure to insure perfect relief.

ONE of the principal firms in Leadenhall Market has issued a circular to "the small farmers, cottiers, and farm labourers of England," calling attention to the fact that 200 tons of rabbits are sent over from Ostend to London every week during the season. These are not wild rabbits, as is generally supposed, but are reared for the most part by Belgian cottagers, who in many instances make considerable additions to their scant incomes by thus contributing to our metropolitan food supply. The circular asks why the example of the Belgian cottagers is not followed by the same classes in this country. Rabbits can be reared with very little trouble and at a trifling cost, and their skins as well as their flesh find a ready market. Wild rabbits as well as tame ones might also be cultivated with profit in this country to a much greater extent than they are at present. Previous to the enactment of the Hares and Rabbits Bill farmers had naturally a strong prejudice against such "small deer," for when not kept under control they are most destructive little animals. When confined to their warrens, however, they are harmless enough, and can be made a considerable source of revenue.

AMONG the presents at a recent wedding was a superb side-saddle, elegantly embroidered and mounted. This was a pleasing variety to the usual line of gifts.

THE military have been called in to the aid of the young ladies in charge of the post-offices, and henceforward gentlemen projecting schemes like that in Hatton Garden will have to take the British soldier into account. Reversing the usual order of procedure, the Postmaster-General has in the first instance called out the reserve forces, and has placed in all the London offices where ladies are in charge a stalwart commissaire armed with a stout stick.

THE Treasury have offered to sell the Custom House in Thames Street to the Corporation of London for three-quarters of a million, for the purpose of the extension of Billingsgate Market which it adjoins.

THEIR is no chance of the scheme for holding an International Exhibition in Rome coming to maturity. The cost would be forty million lire, and the Government say they cannot afford to provide the money, as they want just that amount for the new armaments.

It has been resolved to erect a memorial in Scotland of the late Dean Stanley. Subscrip-

tions have been fixed at a guinea. Principal Tulloch and Dr. Story, of Rosencath, are among the promoters of the memorial.

Two of our great poets are immediately to produce new works. Mr. Browning, satisfied with the success of two series of dramatic lyrics, among the best things he has done, is about to give us a third. Mr. Swinburne, who has written already "Chastelard" and "Bothwell," is about immediately to publish a third volume, which will deal with the ill-fated Queen Mary of Scots.

SOJOURNER TRUTH, the coloured ex-slave, who is 106 years old, is still lecturing. She was born a slave on the banks of the Hudson river, and was owned by a Holland family. Her name was Belle Hardenberg.

The average life of an English gold sovereign is about 18 years—that is, the coin loses three-quarters of a grain in weight in about that length of time. It then ceases to be legal tender.

ACCORDING to present arrangements the Marquis of Lorne will go back to Canada early in January, so as to arrive in time for the meeting of the Canadian Legislature. The princess is expected to return to the Dominion next spring.

It is probable that the convicts who have just completed the construction of the factories, docks, and basins at Chatham will be employed in breaking up old vessels of war—work which has hitherto been done by hands hired for the purpose.

A VIRGINIA paper says: "Probably the oldest twins in existence in all this county are George and Edmund Gravely, who, in good health, are still living within five miles of each other, and within three miles of where they were born, at Leatherwood Post Office, in Henry county, Va. They were 93 years old 1st December, 1881. Their mother lived to be over 100, and their father died at the age of 90.

The deodorizing punkah, or chemical lung, has not come a moment too soon. It is cheap, effective, universally wanted, and of universal application. It is simply a rough towel, stretched and kept saturated with carbolic acid or caustic soda in solution. This waved punkah fashion in a sick-room purifies the air in a very short time. At a trifling cost workrooms full of old and young people craving for oxygen can be made sweet and wholesome.

SPINSTERS pining for husbands might do worse than turn their attention to Manitoba, if the Marquis of Lorne's description is to be relied upon. According to his lordship, any woman who goes out there will have an offer of marriage "at least once a day." "And," adds his Excellency, "the further West they go the more offers they will get."

As this is the age of exhibitions we would suggest a Postage Stamp Exhibition in London. One just held in Vienna, originally organised for a charitable purpose without much anticipation of success, has, nevertheless, yielded quite a handsome sum of money for the poor of Vienna. This is a good example to follow for other cities where considerably more important collections must exist than those in the Austrian capital.

MADAME ALBANI sang a few days ago at the performance of an oratorio at Manchester, for which she received £160. Some curious person has been counting the number of notes in her parts, and finds the total to be 2,975; thus the popular singer was paid at the rate of 13d. per note.

MR. P. T. BARNUM, the American showman, contemplates visiting London with "the largest circus and menagerie in the world," some time during the coming season.

"GENERAL BOOTH," of the Salvation Army, has resolved upon purchasing a large property built for the London Orphan Asylum at Clapton, at a cost of £20,000, and adapting it as a "national barracks for the training of officers, and large congress hall." The latter will accommodate 5,000 persons, and class and drill rooms for 3,000 persons. The property originally cost over £60,000.

By Mr. Deitz's process of covering fruit and

delicate vegetables with burnt bran they can now be imported from a great distance quite fresh. The process, that of burnt bran, which is a charcoal really, absorbs the moisture accumulating about fruit, and thus keeps it dry, under which conditions it will keep fresh for months. All kinds of grapes, apricots, cherries and vegetables have been preserved and retained their origin flavour. The same can be done with any kind of fruit and vegetable which has a skin not very porous. Peaches are difficult to handle, but can be kept by this process for about six weeks. Mr. Deitz has organised a company for using his invention, known as the California Fruit Shipping Company.

THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW.

WITHIN another's eyes you find your sun-light,

The day has gone
In which my smile could give you gladness,
And mine alone.

Ah, when she lays her head upon your bosom,

In tender faith,
Along the corridor of recollection
Will steal the wraith

Of that bright past in whose transcendent moments

I, too, was blest,
Believing that earth had no surer haven
Than your dear breast.

In the first hours of this new love's elation
You may forget,
But surely as the winter follows summer,
You will regret

The heart's fresh spring-time, when hope's
birds sang blithely
From morn till eve;

For each to give was then more blessed

Than to receive.

E'en now I pray you may be happy,
Though Time doth bear
You and your love from me, for aye, in
answer

Unto my prayer.

It is enough that Nature made me loyal,
And you—to change;
Enough that trials which but brought me
nearer

You could estrange.

Good bye. It is for ever and for ever!
No more our feet

Shall tread the path which once together

We found complete.

GEMS OF THOUGHT.

He that rewards the deserving makes himself one of the number.

SPEAK nothing but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

LET him who regrets the loss of time make proper use of that which is to come.

ENVY is always fixed on something superior, and like a sore eye is offended with something bright.

KEEP doing, always doing. Wishing, dreaming, intending, murmuring, talking, sighing and repining are idle and profitless employments.

HAVE any wounded you with injuries meet them with patience. Hasty words rankle the wound, kindness dresses it, forgiveness cures it, and oblivion takes away the scar.

As the rays of the sun notwithstanding their velocity injure not the eye by reason of their minuteness, so the attacks of envy notwithstanding

standing their number ought not to wound our virtue by reason of their insignificance.

WHATEVER difficulties you have to encounter be not perplexed, but think only what is right to do in the sight of Him who seeth all things, and bear without repining the result.

STATISTICS.

OPIUM kills about 160,000 persons annually in China.

It is estimated that about 1,000,000 acres of land have gone out of cultivation in England during the last ten years.

NEARLY 16,000 miles of railway are now in course of construction in the United States, at an estimated cost of £80,000,000.

LAST year the German wire mills supplied England with 30,000 tons of wire, and Russia with 40,000 tons. France received from Germany from 12,000 to 15,000 tons of steel wire for sofa springs, and America not less than 30,000 from the same source.

THE FORTUNES LEFT BY AMERICAN PRESIDENTS.—A list has been published in the Continental papers of the fortunes left by the American Presidents at their deaths. According to this, Washington left 800,000 dols.; John Adams, 75,000 dols.; Jefferson died so poor that had Congress not bought his library for 20,000 dols. there would not have been enough to pay his debts; Madison left 150,000 dols.; Monroe left nothing, and his relations had to bear the cost of his funeral; John Quincy Adams left 55,000 dols.; Jackson, 80,000 dols.; Van Buren, 400,000 dols.; Polk and Taylor, 150,000 dols.; Fillmore, 200,000 dols.; Pierce, 50,000 dols.; Buchanan, 200,000 dols.; Lincoln, 75,000 dols.; and Andrew Johnson, 50,000 dols.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SUET DUMPLINGS.—Two cups fine crumbs soaked in a cup of hot milk, one cup powdered suet, four beaten eggs, one teaspoonful cream of tartar (mixed with one tablespoonful of flour), half a teaspoonful of soda (dissolved in milk), a little salt. Beat the eggs into the soaked crumbs; add salt, suet, sugar, lastly the flour. Beat and knead hard, make into balls, put into floured cloths, leave room to swell, tie tightly and boil one hour. Eat hot, with sauce.

WHY BEGIN DINNER WITH SOUP?—The rationale of the initial soup has often been discussed. Some regard it as calculated to diminish digestive power on the theory that so much fluid taken at first dilutes the gastric juices. But there appears to be no foundation for this belief. A clear soup disappears almost immediately after entering the stomach, and in no way interferes with the gastric juice, which is stored in its appropriate cells ready for action. The habit of commencing dinner with soup has, without doubt, its origin in the fact that aliment in this fluid form—in fact, ready digested—soon enters the blood and rapidly refreshes the hungry man, who after considerable fast and much activity sits down with a sense of exhaustion to commence his principal meal. In two or three minutes after he has taken a plate of good warm soup the feeling of exhaustion disappears and irritability gives way to the gradual rising sense of good fellowship with the circle. Some persons have the custom of allaying exhaustion with a glass of sherry before food—a gastronomic no less than a physiological blunder, injuring the stomach and depraving the palate. The soup introduces at once into the system a small instalment of ready-digested food, and saves the short period of time which must be spent by the stomach in deriving some nutrient from solid aliment, as well as indirectly strengthening the organ of digestion itself for its forthcoming duties.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. G.—In many cases of disordered stomach a teaspoonful of salt in a third of a tumbler of water will effect a speedy cure. Salt will expel worms, if used in a moderate degree, and aids digestion; but the daily use of salt meat is regarded as very injurious.

A.—A lady should thank a gentleman for any attention or favour rendered. It ought not to be necessary for "etiquette" to tell anyone that it is proper to thank people when they have done us a favour or striven to give us pleasure.

B.—Persons troubled with indigestion will be benefited, if not cured, by taking a tablespoonful of lime water in a third of a tumbler of water three times a day, immediately before or during each meal.

C. M.—We prefer not to give you a list of infidel writers and their works, for while they might not do you any harm, there are many whose faith is not so well grounded, and who would be influenced to such an extent by the specious sophistries of infidel writers as to become confirmed sceptics.

H. M.—Physicians generally regard tea as a healthier beverage than coffee.

M. W.—One of the pleasantest ways to eat oranges is to cut the orange in half, across through the cells, not lengthwise; then with a teaspoon lift out the juice from each division. You then get the juice only, and leave the tough parts. A little powdered sugar is sprinkled over each half of the orange after you have severed it.

J. H.—We do not think it wrong for Christians to dance. The objection to dancing by most people is not to the pastime itself, but to the late hours and the associations found at public balls. There are others who object to round dances on the ground that they are calculated to make women immodest. Like all other recreations, if it is indulged in at proper times and in a proper manner, there is no reasonable ground of objection to it.

F. W. B.—Probably some kind of sugar-coating would answer your purpose. This may be applied by sticking each pill upon a very fine wire 4 or 5 inches in length, and dipping it in a hot and highly concentrated syrup of loaf sugar to which a little gelatine has been added. The following plan is taken from a technical contemporary: "The pills are first varnished with the following liquid: ether 100 parts, balsom of tolu 10 parts, colophonium 1 part, absolute alcohol 10 parts—by first rolling them in a mortar with this ethereal solution, and then transferring to a sheet of writing-paper with the sides beat upwards, shaking being continued till they are perfectly dry. Then to a small quantity of the saccharinated albumen (see next recipe) add a few drops of water, at the same time beating for a short while so that a thick paste will be formed. In this mass the pills are stirred, and when moistened on all sides pound into a wooden pill-box, which had been previously filled about one-third with the finest powdered sugar, and immediately rolled in a lively way and with great force, separating them from time to time. When no more sugar will adhere they are dried over a gentle fire (but not brought too near the stove), shaking being continued until dryness is effected." To make the saccharinated albumen: Take white of one egg, and in an evaporating dish beat with it as much powdered sugar (passed through a very fine sieve) as will make rather a thick fluid. Then place it in a warm bath and evaporate to dryness, stirring constantly, that no sugar may be deposited. Pulverise and set aside for use.

VENDETTA.—There are many branches of the Carters, whose armorial bearings differ considerably. Thus, the Yorkshire Carters have for crest, "Out of a mural coronet, or, a demi-monkey, proper." One Northamptonshire family has "a talbot's head, argent," and another, the same crest charged with "a mullet, gules;" one Cornish family has "a lion's head erased, or," and another "on a mural coronet, sable, a talbot passant, argent;" of the three Kentish families of Carters, one bears as crest "a dexter arm in armour embowed, proper, holding in the hand a roll of paper;" another has "a lion's head, holding in the mouth a comet star;" and the third "a talbot sejant, resting the dexter paw on a catherine-wheel, grey, pale argent, and azure." With regard to the Curries and Currays, some bear a "golden fleece, proper," others "a rose, argent, barbed and seeded, vert." The Scottish Curries have a "demion,

proper," motto, "Courage." Another Scottish branch bears "a cock crowing, proper," motto, "Vigilans et audax;" and the Hertfordshire Curries "a cock, gules." The Grove family exhibit also much variety. Two crests appertained to the Dorsetshire and Wiltsire Groves—"a talbot, passant, sable, or," and another has the hound, "collared, argent." Other branches of the Grove family have the following crests: "A stag passant, proper;" "a hand holding a glove, proper," and a "hand holding a thistle, proper." For Groves we have "out of a ducal coronet, or, a cock's head, combed and wattled, gules;" and the Staffordshire Groves have "(on a mount, vert) a dragon, statant, proper, collared and chained, or, charged on the shoulder with an estoile, gules."

THEN AND NOW.

ONE year ago to-day how bright
The sunlight flashed across our sky!
How the fleet-footed hours went by,
And we unconscious of their flight.

The radiant sky was all aglow,
The leaves were drifting at my feet.
And earth was fair, and life was sweet,
When we clasped hands one year ago.

How grandly in the setting sun
Earth in perfected beauty lay:
For on that glad autumnal day
My heart a sweeter life began.

Oh, was it all reality?
E'en now I cannot make it seem:
Aught save a bright yet vanished dream,
And this the waking—without thee.

For all is sadly changed to-day!
Behind the blinding flakes of snow
The sun has hid his crimson glow,
And all the earth is cold and grey.

I miss so much that made life dear!
The clasp of hands—the fond caress—
And all love's forms of tenderness
Have vanished with this dying year.

Poor heart, that never dared to cling
To aught with tenderness and trust:
But it fell trailing in the dust,
Like hunted bird with broken wing.

Oh, was it kind or cruel fate
That sent you, dear, to cross my path?
And were you sent in love or wrath
To bless or leave me desolate?

We cannot tell. I only know
That earth has never been the same
It was, dear love, before you came
To bless my life one year ago.

I sit and dream of now and then,
Here in the stillness all alone!
And know that joy so quickly flown
Can never crown my life again.

With heavy, tearful eyes, I see
Our blissful past go by—and yet
I would not, if I could, forget
How precious you have been to me.

Our meeting has not been in vain;
Your love has gently smoothed my way
And made me stronger day by day
To calm my bear life's painful pain.

I bless you through my blinding tears!
Henceforth, while drifting on life's sea,
The memory of your love for me
Will sweeten all my future years.

No human life is quite complete;
And while its tenderest mem'ries throng
My heart takes up its well-worn song;
"God sends the bitter with the sweet!"

PUZZLES.

I.
DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

1. Fresh.
2. A Scripture proper name.
3. The act of burning up.
4. A bird just hatched.

Primals—to bring forth. Finales—a fish something like the cod. Combined—a young sheep.

II.
NUMERICAL.

The whole, of 15 letters, is a plant.

My 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 denotes sylvan.

My 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 denotes death.

My 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 denotes a screen.

III.
LOGOGRAM.

1.

Cold, sinful, sorrowful, unblest,
Almost I blush to hear thy name,
And own that, nourished at thy breast,
I too partake thy sin and shame.

2.

"Can we not mend that name?" they say.
Extremes oft help when things are worst;
Let all the middle letters stay,
But take the last and place it first.
Oh, blessed change! A genial tide
Of life-blood gushes through each vein;
It lives, it loves—a home provide
For such a guest with such a train!

3.

And this it is not hard to do;
The letter that was last restored
Yet, kept at the beginning too,
Gives it a home beloved, adored.
Bright faces glow, glad sounds are heard;
All earth, half heaven, is in that word.

IV.
CHABADE.

Sometimes you pronounce the first with exclamation,
If you want to express any pleasant sensation.
How glad is the second, how you are delighted,
When the whole you have found, first and second
united.

V.
DIAMOND.

1. A letter.
2. Good.
3. A marshal's staff.
4. A bird of the parrot kind.
5. Remarkable.
6. A motion.
7. A letter.

VI.
ENIGMA.

I'm a strange contradiction;
I'm new and I'm old;
I'm often in tatters, and oft decked with gold;
Though I never could read, yet lettered I'm found;
Though blind, I enlighten, yet loose, I am bound;
I am often in black, and I'm often in white;
I am grave, I am gay, I am heavy and light;
In form, too, I differ—I'm thick and I'm thin;
I've no flesh and no bone, yet I'm covered with skin;
I've more points than the compass, more stops than
the flute;
I sing without voice, without speaking confute;
I'm English, I'm German, I'm French, and I'm
Dutch;
Some love me too fondly, some slight me too much;
I often die soon, though I sometimes live ages;
And no monarch alive can have so many pages.

VII.

SIX-LETTER SQUARE WORDS.

1. This plant grows far across the sea.
2. A justifier this will be.
3. Into those pages oft we dive.
4. A number more than six and five.
5. A kind of mineral this one shows.
6. An English river here transpose.

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